the Munsters

and the Great Camera Caper

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the Munsters

and the GREAT CAMERA CAPER

Authorized Edition
based on the well-known
television series

by William Johnston

illustrated by Arnie Kohn

WHITMAN PUBLISHING COMPANY • Racine, Wisconsin

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Printed in U.S.A. by Western Printing
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1

Hollywood Comes to the Munsters

FROM DIFFERENT hiding places inside, the Munsters peered anxiously at the strange figure in front of their home. Peeking out through twin peepholes in the petrified oak door were Herman and Lily Munster, man and wife—Herman, who was often mistaken by outsiders for a modern model of Frankenstein's monster, and Lily, whose jet-black hair set off a face strikingly un-lifelike in its paleness.

"Look at him! Look at that tan!" whispered Herman. "He must *live* in the sun!" He shuddered at the thought.

"And look at that nose—straight as a pin!" hissed Lily. "There's no excuse for that. A good plastic surgeon could build up a hump on it in a jiffy."

In his cellar workshop, squinting into the eye-

piece of a periscope, Grandpa Munster spoke in a quivering whisper to his pet bat, Igor. Grandpa Munster, who at any given moment might bear a striking resemblance to either Genghis Khan, Jack the Ripper, or Mr. Hyde, was now appearing incognito, and looked a good deal like a kindly old gentleman who had just fulfilled his lifetime ambition to lace the world's bedtime cocoa with arsenic.

"Look at those blue eyes!" said Grandpa with revulsion to Igor. "They're enough to thaw the blood. I tell you, we're in for trouble!"

"Eeeeeek!" squeaked Igor.

"Quiet!" snarled Grandpa. "Or I'll send you back to your cave."

"Squeeeee!" responded Igor.

In his upstairs bedroom, Eddie, son of Herman and Lily, stared out through a crack in the windowpane. Eddie had inherited his mother's and father's best features. Yet he was a personality in his own right, as shown by his satyr-like ears, a special distinction that neither Herman nor Lily could claim.

Eddie spoke in a trembling murmur to his hound, Spot, who, if it had not been for the wolf-shaped dark shadow against one wall, would have appeared to have been absent.

"Ten fingers and ten toes!" gasped Eddie. "He must have had the others removed just so he could go around scaring little kids!"

A blood-chilling howl filled the room. It was followed by a growl that was undoubtedly a question.

"Not yet," replied Eddie. "But if he makes the wrong move—sic 'im!"

Peering out from behind a parlor drape was Marilyn Munster, Herman and Lily Munster's niece. Marilyn viewed the stranger with sympathy. She was cursed with the same affliction—rosy cheeks, bright sparkling eyes, slender construction, an absence of blemishes, ten fingers and ten toes, and warm blood. How Marilyn wished that she could be normal like her aunt and uncle and Eddie and Grandpa! And such was the size of Marilyn's heart that she included this evil-appearing intruder in her wish.

The stranger standing at the curb studied the Munster home with irritation, unaware that he was being viewed with foreboding from inside.

He was a tall, slender, blue-eyed, ten-fingered and ten-toed, warm-blooded young man, clearly a native of Southern California (Hollywood Division), since he was garbed in a rainbow-hued Hawaiian shirt, riding breeches and beach sandals, topped off with an Alpine beanie.

The really odd thing about him was that he was regarding the Munster home with irritation rather than outright horror, as was usually the case.

The house was a replica of a Victorian mansion, conjuring up images of fog-shrouded moors and mournfully wailing night winds. Its thick-draped, arched windows, its massive structure, its fingerlike spires—all these helped to complete the image. One could imagine—or was it imagination?—a continuous stream of ghostly moanings and clankings emanating from within its dismal interior.

In other words, all in all, the Munster home

looked to the stranger like a set for a Hollywood monster picture. And, believing it to be that, with light step and easy mind, he approached the entrance.

At the sound of the door chimes clanging out "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You," the Munsters, Herman and Lily, Grandpa and Eddie and Marilyn, converged on the foyer —with Spot, shadow-fangs bared, crouched on the stairway.

"Open the welcome mat," whispered Grandpa to Herman. "I've got the cage all set up below."

"But maybe he's a friend—maybe a bill collector," said Herman.

"With them blue eyes?" answered Grandpa. "Not likely."

"There's only one way to find out," said Lily bravely. And with that she grasped the door handle and began to tug vigorously but without much result. "Give me a hand," she said, outweighed by the petrified oak door.

"Wait'll I get a wrench and I'll give you one

of Herman's hands," replied Grandpa. "Right or left?"

"That's an expression, Grandpa," explained Herman. "She wants help."

"Why didn't she say so?"

Herman, Grandpa, and Eddie pitched in.

But the door refused to budge.

"When was the last time somebody went out?" Herman grunted.

"I went out a while back to get a newspaper," Grandpa said. "But there was nothing in it but a lot of society news—something about a tea party in Boston. So I haven't been out this way since. Why use the door when you can fly a lot easier?"

The tugging halted. Herman sent Eddie for a can of midnight oil. The hinges were lubricated and the tugging began again. Finally the opening widened.

As the clear-eyed, rosy-cheeked, ten-fingered and ten-toed young man appeared in sight, the Munsters, again as one, stepped back and gasped in single-voiced revulsion.

The young man blinked uncertainly, then re-

covered and blessed them with his most blazing Hollywood smile.

"Good morning! John Dallas here," he said.

From the stairs came the growl that asked permission.

"Not yet," little Eddie murmured.

Puzzled by the Munsters' expressions, John Dallas continued, speaking in the British accent he had picked up from an aunt in Peoria who had once sat through an English movie eight times.

"Dash it all, I thought you'd rise to the name," he said. "I'm John Dallas. *The* John Dallas. Hollywood movie director and all that, you know. You people *are* in show biz, aren't you?"

"I get the pitch now," said Grandpa disgustedly. "He's peddling an encyclopedia. Give him the welcome mat, Herman!"

John Dallas beamed. "Welcome mat. That's your famous midwestern hospitality, isn't it? How droll. Forgive me, chaps . . ." he began, then raised his Alpine beanie in the direction of Lily and Marilyn, adding, ". . . and ladies. But I saw the house, and then you opened the door—finally

—and I saw you, and naturally I assumed that you were actors—made up as characters in a horror movie, don't you know. You can understand the mistake."

Herman, Lily, Grandpa, and Eddie turned their eyes on Marilyn. Together they nodded, signifying that they could well understand how the stranger had made the error.

"We keep hoping she'll grow out of it," said Lily wistfully.

"Ah . . . yes," said Dallas, blinking again. "This does present somewhat of a sticky wicket for me, though," he went on. "Mind if I enter? There's just the slim chance that you may be able to yank my chestnuts from the fire for me."

"Last chance to give him the welcome mat, Herman," said Grandpa. "Once a salesman gets his foot inside the door there's no getting rid of him—short of something drastic. But that would call for my putting in some overtime in the cellar, and you know how expensive ingredients are these days."

"Mind your manners, Grandpa," said Lily re-

provingly. "He's not a salesman. He's a movie director, and his wicky is sticket. Never let it be said that a stranger came to the Munster door with a wicky sticket and was turned away unwickied."

"Wicket," said Dallas hopefully.

"Salesmen, movie directors, they're all cut from the same shroud," grumbled Grandpa.

"Don't mind Grandpa," Herman apologized to Dallas. "He's old-fashioned, thinks there's some good in everybody. It's a sort of prejudice." He gestured toward the entrance hall. "Come on in, and bring your whiskey ticket with you."

"Wicket—that's wicket," said Dallas, moving past the Munsters.

Inside, Dallas pulled up, startled. Gloom hung in the entrance hall like smog. A swampy dampness trickled from the walls and ceiling. Each step on the stone floor rang hollow like a stone falling onto an empty oil drum. The aroma was that of a dank cellar that was hung with cobwebs and bats' nests.

"Charming," Dallas said, swallowing.

"We like it," Lily preened. "It's no morgue, but it fits us."

Dallas forced the Hollywood smile to his face. "Well put," he said to Lily. "You took the words right out of my mouth, as it were."

"Next time you're in there get his tongue," Grandpa advised Lily.

Herman led the way into the parlor. As Dallas entered the room at his heels the grandfather clock in the corner began to quiver menacingly. Instead of a cuckoo, a jet-black raven issued forth, saying, "The *ti*-yem is now *ni*-yen o'clock. Nevermore!" and returned to its unusual abode.

Groggily, Dallas headed for a chair. As he sat down cautiously, Herman, Lily, Eddie, and Marilyn stationed themselves in a row on the sofa. Grandpa lingered in the shadows, pouting.

With considerable effort, Dallas composed himself. "Well, now, here's my predicament," he said. "I sent my advance man out here a few weeks ago to find me the perfect typical American home in the typical American suburb. He found it, of course—talented chap, actually. It's

the house next door to yours. And, as luck would have it, in true Hollywood tradition the owners were leaving on vacation. So we were able to lease the house for the shooting."

"Shooting!" said Grandpa from the dimness. "I knew he was up to something!"

"That's a technical term," Dallas explained. "It means filming a motion picture."

Grandpa fell silent again.

"You mean you're going to make a motion picture next door?" Marilyn said.

"Righto! It's a romantic comedy—my own specialty, if I may be so immodest as to say so."

"Sure," said Herman. "Go on, say it."

"Thank you. It's a romantic comedy—my specialty," Dallas repeated. "A fun picture, actually. It's the laugh-loaded saga of the typical American family living in the typical American home in the typical American suburb. Except that we play it for chuckles. In other words, we make them appear to be really horrible people. Get the humor? The father, for instance, is driven to bringing home samples from the bank where he works, in

order to meet the family's charge-account debts. The mother is home only three hours a week as a result of her total dedication to her bridge club. And the child, a boy about your son's age, dabbles in setting fires and counterfeiting. Not a bad kid, understand; he's just trying to get his parents' attention."

Lily giggled. "It *does* sound like fun."

"We think so," said Dallas. "You can imagine the boffs we'll get when we pit father against son, son against mother, mother against father, and they express their feelings for each other in various violent and amusing ways." He muffled a guffaw. "In one scene, for example, we have the boy installing a cage beneath the welcome mat. His plan is that when his father steps on it he'll. . . ." Dallas suddenly scowled. "Although," he said, "we may have to strike that scene. I have the feeling I've seen it or heard of it being done before."

"It sounds peachy," said little Eddie. "I could play that part."

"Well, we—"

"I could do it," Eddie insisted. "I played the

part of the oven in our school play, 'Hansel and Gretel.' "

"I'm afraid not," said Dallas. "We've already engaged a child star for the role. Bobby Freckles —I'm sure you've seen him."

"I saw him one night," said Grandpa from the shadows. "I was flying over the outdoor movie and there he was, the sweetest, prettiest little kid you could ever imagine. Made me so sick I darn near went into a tailspin."

Dallas smiled sympathetically at the other Munsters. "So that's how it stands," he went on. "My stars—Bobby Freckles, Lynne East, and Rock Bound—will be arriving in a week, along with my crew. And here I am, stuck with my sticky wicket."

"Here comes the pitch," said Grandpa. "I told you he's a salesman!"

"I thought it was rather obvious," said Dallas. "The sticky wicket, you see, is this: We're supposed to be shooting a typical American suburban scene. And right smack-dab in the middle of it will be your . . . ah, your charming, ah, home.

It *is* charming, believe me. It's just the sort of monstros—ah, house, I'd like to have for my own. But let's face it; it is *not* typical suburbia."

"Thank you," said Lily. "That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said about our little nest."

"You mean our house is in the way?" said Herman.

Dallas beamed. "Took the words right out of my mouth again, so to speak."

"Oh, well, don't worry about that," said Herman. "Just wait a while. Lily is always saying that sooner or later Grandpa is going to blow the house to bits with one of those concoctions he mixes up in the cellar."

"I'm afraid I can't wait," replied Dallas. "My producer, Daryl S. Panic, is not a patient man. He has a saying: 'Time is money.' If I don't start shooting on time, I'll have him on my neck. Dash it all, you *do* understand my problem, don't you? Your charming home is my fly in the ointment, as it were. However, I do have one solution. I hope this won't offend you. I wonder if you'd allow me to put up a false front?"

"I knew it! I knew it!" Grandpa howled. "Here it comes! Watch him pull a set of encyclopedias out from under that beanie!"

"By 'false front' I mean a flat," said Dallas. "Our artists will paint a scene—a large one, very large—and we'll put it up in front of your abode. In that way the house will be obscured, and only the false front—the painted scene—will be visible to the cameras."

"That might not be a bad idea," said Herman. "It would shut out some of the light."

"Of course, we'd pay you for the inconvenience," said Dallas.

"Well . . ." Lily began doubtfully. "What sort of scene would it be?"

"I've given that some thought," replied Dallas. "It strikes me that what the house next door needs to make it not just a perfect typical American suburban home, but a super-perfect typical American suburban home, is a few recreational facilities. So the flat, as I see it, would show your property to be an extension of the property next door. And it would contain those recreational neces-

sities that are so typical of every typical American suburban homestead—a pool, of course, and a wildlife preserve, a zoo, a botanical garden, and the inevitable barbecue pit."

"That tears it!" raged Grandpa. "He's a sheep in wolf's clothing! Know what he'd do? He'd send that picture overseas and give all the foreigners the wrong idea about how Americans live." Approaching Dallas angrily, he said, "Want a typical American suburban family, do you? Then do the honest thing for a change. Shoot a really typical American family. Shoot us! Shoot us, the Munsters. Now that, that's typical. Hear me? Shoot us!"

It was evident that Dallas was sorely tempted to do what Grandpa suggested.

But Herman intervened. "Grandpa, I don't know what you're so upset about," he said. "Mr. Dallas is doing us a favor. Why, with all that—that zoo and that botanical garden and everything—with all that out on the front lawn, it's bound to shut off even more light than that false front he spoke about in the first place."

"Bah!" shouted Grandpa. "We'll be overrun with Hollywood characters. And take my word for it, they're not our kind."

"I'm sure they're very nice. Besides, perhaps they *are* normal, like us," said Lily.

Grandpa shouted "Bah!" once more, then stomped across the room to the casket, lifted the lid, and disappeared.

Dallas stared after him.

"That's the way to the cellar," said Herman. "Grandpa always goes below to sulk."

"He's closer to the old country down there," Lily explained. "It comforts him."

Again with effort, Dallas pulled himself together. "I wonder if we could settle on a price," he said.

"Oh, we couldn't take any money—not since you're doing us a favor," replied Herman. "But," he said, "there is one thing you might do for us. I know I'd sort of like to watch a movie being made. Lily, how about you?"

"Anything unreal always appeals to me," said Lily.

"And Eddie and all of us would, too," Herman went on. "Would that be all right? Could we watch?"

"No money?" said Dallas, amazed. He beamed again. "Daryl S. Panic, my producer, will be delighted. He has a saying: 'A penny saved is a penny earned.' Yes, of course, Mr. Munster. Yes, yes, a thousand times yes. You may have the freedom of the set. Our typical American suburban home is your typical American suburban home, as it were."

Then, arising, Dallas offered a hand to Herman. "Shall we call it a deal?"

Herman clasped Dallas's hand in his own. "Deal."

Dallas yanked back, startled. "My gracious, you *do* have a chilly grasp, don't you?"

Herman lowered his eyes. "Lily always says, 'Cold hands, cold heart.' But, I guess that's what a wife's for, eh, to butter a fellow up?" He turned to his niece. "Marilyn, why don't you show Mr. Dallas to the door?"

Dallas blazed away at the remaining Munsters

with his smile, then trotted after the departing Marilyn.

"Best to detour around the welcome mat with Grandpa in the cellar," Herman called after him.

Dallas nodded absently. His attention was on Marilyn.

"Are you really related to those others?" he said to her as they proceeded through the entrance hall. "It's difficult to believe."

"I know," she said sadly. "We've tried everything, but the doctors say it's hopeless. I was born with bad blood. My mother was a Miss America."

"Oh, then we have something in common—show biz in the blood," said Dallas. He took her hand and held it a second before she pulled away. "You're not in the least bit clammy," he said.

Tears appeared in Marilyn's eyes. "That's a horrid thing to say. I hope, for your sake, that my uncle never hears you talking to me that way."

"Sorry," Dallas murmured, perplexed. Then he brightened again. "I do hope we'll see a great deal of each other while I'm here," he said. "I mean, if it is all right with your family, of course. I

wouldn't want your uncle at my throat."

"That's Eddie's pet, not Uncle Herman's."

"Pardon?"

But they had reached the door.

Marilyn smiled prettily. "Good-bye, Mr. Dallas. It's been nice meeting you."

"Call me John. And I'm certain we'll meet again—very soon."

"Good-bye, John. Don't step on the welcome mat."

Dallas skipped nimbly over the mat and departed, waving.

Marilyn remained in the doorway. Testing, she touched a dainty toe to the welcome mat. It fell open, revealing a strong cage below.

"Grandpa!" she scolded.

"I wasn't going to hurt him," Grandpa grumbled. "I was just trying out the trapdoor."

In the parlor that evening, as Herman sat reading the *Mortuary Times,* a wild, maniacal and conspiratorial howl came floating down from above.

Smiling warmly, Herman called out, "Lily!"

Lily came in from the kitchen. "Yes, dear?"

"That howl," said Herman. "Was that Eddie or Spot?"

"Why, I'm not sure. They sound so much alike these days. Almost like brothers." Then, a trifle worriedly, she said, "I wonder what they're howling about."

Herman shrugged. "Boys will be boys—or, hounds will be hounds, as the case may be."

"They're plotting something," said Lily.

"Don't worry. It couldn't be anything really dangerous. Not if I know my boys—or hounds."

Lily smiled. "Yes, I suppose not. I get worked up too easily." She frowned again. "And Grandpa down there in his workshop, cooking up some new concoction."

"You always expect the best," Herman chided. "Relax or you'll worry yourself out of an early grave."

"Well, we can't stay dead forever."

Herman shivered. "Don't talk like that. You give a body the willies."

2

Lights, Camera, Duck!

FOR DAYS vans had been arriving at the house next door, bringing equipment and members of Dallas's crew. Now the lights and cameras were in place and Dallas was ready to shoot the first scene of his new romantic comedy.

The scene was to be shot in the kitchen. It was an ultra-modern kitchen, titled by its designer the "Look, Ma, No Hands" kitchen. The appliances —the range, the automatic clothes washer, the dryer, and so on—were built in, giving the room an almost vacant look. The appliances were also electronically controlled, to the extent that they were able to operate without the interference of human hands.

At the moment, John Dallas was poking about curiously, searching for the built-in range. It had

been concealed so expertly that it seemed not to be there at all.

Near the doorway stood the stars—Rock Bound, Lynne East, and Bobby Freckles.

Rock Bound was tall, dark, blue-eyed and sunny-faced. In a phrase, he was a superfluity of teeth. Lynne East, too, was easily identifiable as a Hollywood product. She was exquisite, with limpid blue eyes that shone from underneath long lashes with the steely glint of a loan shark.

Bobby Freckles, standing a step to the rear of Rock and Lynne, had a typically American boy faraway look in his eyes as he totaled up the day's expected profits on his real estate holdings. Bobby was also blue-eyed. In addition, he was red-haired and, naturally, freckle-faced. He was so typically the typical American boy that he looked outrageously untypical.

As any gossip column reader well knew, Rock and Lynne were soon to become the typically ideal young married couple. They were to be wed as soon as this picture was, as Lynne had so lyrically put it to the columnists, "in the can." For

the benefit of the crew, each and every member of which was a roving correspondent for one or another of the Hollywood columnists, they were exhibiting the manifestations of their great love, cooing sweet nothings into each other's ears, giggling like idiots, and pecking at each other's cheeks in the manner of simpleminded chickens.

Dallas gave up the search and walked over to them. "Bit of a sticky wicket," he said. "Can't find the range."

Rock looked startled. "Ah didn't know this was a western," he said, adopting a drawl.

"The stove, the cooking machine," Dallas explained. "In this first scene, Lynne," he went on, "you'll be at the range whipping up a batch of girl scout cookies for Bobby to—"

"Boy scout, you mean," said Lynne.

"No! Girl scout. That's where the laughs come in. In the script, Bobby will be bootlegging girl scout cookies. But if we can't find the range, we'll have to change the action."

"That doesn't sound like me, the typical American boy," complained Bobby.

"It's all make-believe, dear boy," said Dallas. "The audience won't truly believe that you're bootlegging."

"I don't mean that," said Bobby. "I mean the girl scout cookies. Cookies are girl stuff, and I'm the typical American boy. Couldn't I be bootlegging something more in character—baseballs, maybe?"

"We could bake the cookies in the shape of baseballs," Lynne suggested. "That would be cute."

Bobby sighed. "That might help some. But cookies are still cookies, and it's just not *me*."

"Stiff upper lip, dear boy," Dallas said. "We may not be able to find the range. If we can't, we'll change it to baseballs. Although there go the laughs, and I suppose the writers will have kittens." To Lynne, he said, "How familiar are you with kitchen ranges, darling?"

"I think there's one in the apartment at home," she replied. "As a matter of fact, yes, I'm sure of it. I think I remember seeing it only a few days ago when I went out to the kitchen for ice cubes.

Isn't it that thing with the handle and the little spout?"

Rock Bound chuckled affectionately. "That's the automatic dishwasher, honey-poo."

"I believe that sounds a bit more like a teakettle," said Dallas. "But, no matter. We'll leave that in. Mother doesn't know the kitchen range from a teakettle. Quite funny. And for all we know, it may be typical, what? Now, darling," he said to Lynne, "are you sure you understand the mood of the script?"

"Oh, she's got that down pat," said Rock, looping an arm around Lynne's shoulders. "You're not talking to just *any* actress, John. This is Miss Grapefruit, 1965."

Lynne giggled. "Rock is my severest critic."

"Quite," said Dallas. "All right, then, shall we take our places? Lynne, I want you at the, ah . . . well, for the nonce, take up a stance wherever you think a kitchen range might logically be. Play it by ear, so to speak."

Lynne went directly to the kitchen sink.

"Well done." Dallas applauded.

"I told you," grinned Rock. "Miss Grapefruit, 1965."

"Rock," Dallas said, "I want you outside. You'll be coming in the back door. And, oh, yes, you'll find a basket of five-, ten-, fifteen- and twenty-dollar bills out there. You will enter—on cue, of course; try to remember that—loaded down with moola. They're the samples you're bringing home from the bank. Got that?"

"Fifteen-dollar bills?" Rock asked.

"Yes. Don't bother about it now. That's the whole gist of the story, but it needn't concern you."

Rock flashed his teeth. "Right." He departed.

"Bobby," Dallas said, "you'll be at the kitchen table. You'll find a container of acid, a penknife, and some engraving plates there. As you know, you're a boy counterfeiter. As the story opens, you'll be etching new plates for fifteen-dollar bills. Is that 'you,' old chap?"

"That's more like it," Bobby answered. "But that cookie bit still bothers me."

"Do be a little trouper, chap," Dallas coaxed.

"I'll long-distance the writers tonight and see if we can change it to baseballs."

Grudgingly, Bobby took his place on the set.

"Ready, all?" Dallas called.

"I don't have anything to do with my hands," Lynne said.

"Give her a grapefruit to juggle," Bobby suggested.

Dallas considered that, but decided against it. "Prop!" he called.

A propman appeared at his side.

"A skillet and a gross or so of girl scout cookies," Dallas ordered. And as the prop man withdrew, he explained to Lynne, "You can be frying cookies there at the . . . ah, range, darling. And tossing them up in the air. The way they do flapjacks. That will add a bit of visual interest, don't you think?"

"I don't know," Lynne replied. "Shall I call my agent and ask?"

"Never mind, darling."

Within moments the prop man had supplied Lynne with the skillet and cookies.

"Attention now, here's the action," Dallas said. "Rock, you'll come in the back door loaded down with samples from the bank. Ah . . . drop a few. The fall of money is always somehow hilarious. And, Bobby, you'll spot Rock first. You'll react instinctively. Here is your daddy. Snatch up the bottle of acid and fling it at him with all the savagery at your command. Don't worry, Rock, it's not real acid. It's only Coke."

Dallas turned to his leading lady. "Lynne, you'll be distracted from your cookie-frying by Daddy's shriek of pain as the acid hits him. And, seeing him, you'll fly at him with the hot skillet. Clear?"

Lynne gave him a Miss Grapefruit look.

"What exactly confuses you?" Dallas said. "It seems perfectly clear to me. This is the typical American suburban home, and the typical American suburban action as Daddy arrives home in the evening from a hard day's thievery at the bank—the whole thing is played for laughs. Now, any questions?"

From behind the door came Rock's virile voice.

"Would you repeat all that from back there when you said, 'All right, here's the action'?" he asked. "I can't hear too good behind this door."

"Never mind, dear boy, just enter and defend yourself," Dallas replied. To Bobby, he said, "Please stop sipping the acid, chap. You'll need it to fling at Daddy."

"Can't we get this over with?" said Lynne crossly. "I'm exhausted already."

"Righto! Ready, all? Rock?"

There was a muffled sound. Dallas assumed that Rock was replying that he was ready.

"Bobby? Lynne?"

"Ready already," Lynne grumbled.

Dallas faced the crew. "Lights!"

A blast of light filled the set.

"Cameras!"

"Rolling," came the reply from the chief cameraman.

Dallas faced the set again. "Action!"

Lynne began leisurely flipping cookies into the air, occasionally catching one in the skillet.

Diligently, Bobby dipped the point of the pen-

knife into the acid and then scratched marks on the engraving plates.

"Top ho!" Dallas glowed. "Now . . . enter, Rock!"

The door remained closed.

"Rock . . . now!"

Nothing.

"Now! Now! Now! Now, you idiot!"

The door opened. A figure appeared. But it was not the toothy countenance of Rock Bound that came into view. It was the angular and disturbing figure of Herman Munster.

The camera that was zeroed-in on the doorway exploded in a flash of sparks and hisses.

The bottle of acid flew into the air, but not at Daddy. It zoomed straight up, as Bobby Freckles, spotting Herman, screeched in horror and made for the nearest exit.

Lynne, assuming that Bobby's screech was her cue, turned toward the doorway. She, too, deserted the script. Girl scout cookies rained on the set. Miss Grapefruit, 1965, ran shrieking for the doorway.

The crew members deserted their posts in ragged disorder. They piled up in the doorway behind Miss Grapefruit's hasty exit. Then, clawing, they abruptly popped through and disappeared.

Dallas stood stock-still, stunned. He stared in anguish at Herman.

Then he uttered the most useless word of the day.

"Cut," Dallas whimpered.

"We came calling," Herman said amiably. "But I guess we got here at the wrong time to see much. Is this the coffee break?"

Dallas groaned. "We were shooting," he said. "You've absolutely destroyed the mood, chap." Then he added, "What do you mean, 'we'?"

Herman turned to the doorway. "All clear," he said. "You can come on in."

In came Lily, Grandpa, Eddie, and Marilyn.

"Really," Dallas said, "I suppose I should have told you, but you can't go barging about the set like that. When we're shooting, we must—incidentally, did you see anything of my leading man, Rock Bound, out there?"

"Must be that fella that dived into the pile of money," replied Grandpa. "Never saw a fella so greedy. You'd think he was trying to hide."

"Can't blame him for that, with his looks," said Herman.

"Sh! Sh! Sh!" Lily scolded. "Not everybody can be handsome like you, Herman. Some people have to get along on personality. He *did* have a nice scream."

Dallas counted calmly to ten. Then he said, "Please, Munsters, stay just where you are. Don't move. I have to collect my cast and crew. Will you stay here? Promise? Just stand right here, right here, as still as . . . as the dead."

"That's a snap, if that's all you want," said Herman. To the others, he said, "Act natural."

Dallas withdrew. Approximately a half hour later he returned. He was followed reluctantly by the crew and the stars.

Dallas introduced the leading players to the Munsters. "They live—if that's the proper word—next door," he said. "And they're very important to the picture. I want you to treat them as if

they were part of the gang. Clear?"

"No," said Lynne. "Shall I call my agent?"

"Take my word for it. Very important."

"I got it," said Rock, showing his teeth. "The big one is really Daryl S. Panic in disguise." He nodded to Herman. "Hi, Mr. Panic. I'd know you anywhere."

Dallas addressed his leading man. "Think, Rock. What does Daryl S. Panic look like?"

"Little short guy with a bald head and always carrying around a Pekingese," Rock replied.

"And what does this fellow look like?"

"Twelve-footer and looks a lot like Franken—oh, yes, I see what you mean. But I thought maybe he'd been to makeup."

Bobby Freckles suddenly pointed an accusing finger at Eddie. "Make him stop staring at me," he complained to Dallas. "He makes me nervous."

"Don't be so touchy," Dallas said. "You're a star. You have to put up with a little adulation from your fans every now and then."

Lily cluck-clucked at Eddie. "Be careful, dear. You mustn't hurt anyone's feelings. Mr. Freckles

can't help how he looks."

"May we resume shooting?" said Dallas wearily. "The day is half shot and we haven't even begun shooting, as it were." He called back to the crew. "Is that replacement camera in position?"

"Ready to roll."

"Munsters all," Dallas said, "will you please stand *behind* the cameras this time?" He pointed. "Over there."

The Munsters obeyed.

"Actors, take your places," Dallas said.

Lynne, Rock, and Bobby returned to their stations.

Dallas joined the Munsters behind the cameras. "Well," he smiled, "no harm done, except to the camera. And actually, this may be for the best. Poor rehearsal, good play, as they say, what? Surely nothing worse can happen than what's already happened."

"Don't look on the dark side," Lily told him.

Dallas blinked, then smiled once more, but not quite so zestfully. Then he faced the set.

"Lights! Cameras! Action!"

3

Lynne Gets an Idea

THIS TIME it appeared as if the scene would proceed as planned.

Lynne casually flipped girl scout cookies into the air and, with practice, gained skill in the art. She began catching them backhanded, and then over her shoulder.

Dallas called a cheery, "Well done!"

Unfortunately Lynne interrupted the game of pitch-and-catch to take a bow.

"No! No! No!" Dallas groaned.

Quickly, she recovered, bounced a cookie off the heel of her slipper and netted it with the skillet.

Bobby Freckles, meanwhile, kept his attention fixed to the task of etching the likeness of his personal hero, the late John D. Rockefeller, on the engraving plate that would one day, as the story

went, turn out fifteen-dollar bills.

Dallas was exultant.

"Now, Rock . . ." he called out.

The door opened and Rock Bound entered—teeth first. His arms were wrapped protectively around a basket of five-, ten-, fifteen- and twenty-dollar bills. A number of the bills floated idly to the floor. Behind the cameras, Dallas chuckled appreciatively.

Rock squinted into the lights and peered about, trying to locate the exact position of the camera. Then, finding it, he strode forward, teeth flashing, into the center of the kitchen.

Bobby reacted. Spotting Rock, he snatched up the container of Coke and splashed the liquid in Rock's direction.

It was well aimed.

It caught Rock full in the teeth. He gurgled and sputtered. The basket of bills crashed to the floor as he plunged his hands toward his face.

"Scream in pain, dear boy," Dallas said calmly from behind the cameras.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" Rock shrieked. He

spoiled the pure beauty of it, however, by peeking out from behind his hands to make sure that the camera was still on his teeth.

Now Lynne reacted. She whipped around, saw Rock, then stomped toward him, skillet upraised, spewing a torrent of abuse.

"There you are! Thirty-seven seconds late! Where have you been? Out with your cronies, I suppose—those other bank robbers! And look at my kitchen floor! I just scrubbed and waxed that floor three years ago, and *look* at it! Dirty money all over it!"

"I—" Rock began.

He was interrupted by Bobby, who had left the table and was now competing for his attention by stamping on his left foot.

"Where's my new Thunderbird!" Bobby nagged. "You promised me a new Thunderbird! Where's my new Thunderbird you promised me!"

"You're too young for an automobile of your own," Rock responded.

"I can grow into it, can't I?" Bobby said. "You always tell me I can grow into my galoshes."

Lynne took up the attack again. "I work and slave for you three hours a week, week in and week out, and what thanks do I get? All you do is dirty up my kitchen floor with money, money, money. Which reminds me, why didn't you open the door for me that time we visited the Grabfelters?"

"That was nine years ago!" Rock protested.

"Excuses! Excuses! It's always excuses! I got a run in my hose that night when I walked into the Grabfelters' rose bush. And all because you didn't open the car door for me! But do I get any sympathy from you? No! All I get from you is, 'That was nine years ago.' No wonder I have splitting headaches."

"I need eight hundred dollars to buy looseleaf paper for school!" Bobby shouted, now stamping on Rock's right foot. "Give me eight hundred dollars!"

"Eight hundred dollars? For looseleaf paper?"

"I'm going to corner the market on looseleaf paper," Bobby explained. "Give me eight hundred dollars."

"And another thing," Lynne screamed. "You took the garbage out when you left this morning!"

"I'm *supposed* to take the garbage out!" Rock fumed.

"Not when I'm saving it!"

"You're *saving* garbage?"

Lynne burst into tears. "I can't do *anything* right around here! I can't even save a little garbage. I can't have any hobbies. All you want me to do is work and slave, work and slave, a hundred and six hours a year, year in and year out! I might as well be a servant girl!"

"But—" Rock said.

From behind the cameras, Dallas called, "Cut! Very good, stars! Excellent!"

Lynne shook the skillet in Rock's teeth. "And speaking of garbage," she raged, "I haven't had a complete new wardrobe since May."

"This *is* May."

"But this is the *last* of May. It's been *almost* a whole month!"

"It seems—"

"Excuses again! Oh, sure, you can dump your

dirty old money all over my nice clean kitchen floor, but when I ask for a simple little thing like a complete new wardrobe, all I get is excuses, excuses, excuses!"

"Cut!" Dallas called again. "Cut, dears."

Since stamping on his toes had failed to get Rock's undivided attention, Bobby now ripped the jacket from his back.

"I want a Thunderbird! I want eight hundred dollars!" Bobby screamed.

"Ouch, my toe!" Rock yelled. He raised his leg to minister to the toes of his left foot. This left him teetering on the right leg.

"No, dear boy," Dallas commented from the sidelines. "He ripped your jacket this time. It was earlier that he was stamping on your toe."

But Rock did not hear, for Lynne was now raging, "Stand on both feet when I yell at you!"

"Cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, cut!" Dallas said.

"I can't stand on both feet," Rock protested. "He ripped my jacket!"

"Excuses again! You're doing it on purpose. You always stand on one foot when I yell at you!

You just want to humiliate me!"

"Darlings, will you please, pretty please, cut?"

"I—" Rock tried again.

"Don't yell at me when I'm yelling at you!" Lynne yelled. "You know what it does to my ulcers. You're trying to put me in the hospital!"

"Hit 'im, Mom," Bobby suggested.

Lynne glared at Rock. "Don't you *dare* hit me, you monster!"

Rock, still hugging his toe, screamed, "I didn't hit you! He said—"

"Let's see how *you* like being hit!" Lynne broke in. She gave him a vigorous shove.

Rock tottered a second, then, still holding fast to his toe, he crashed to the floor.

"Cut," Dallas murmured.

Lynne threw herself on top of Rock and began pummeling him about the head and shoulders.

Bobby joined in. He launched himself into the air and landed on Rock's stomach.

"Ooooooooof!"

"Crew!" Dallas bellowed. And he charged onto the set.

The cameramen and lightmen abandoned their stations and followed him.

Bobby had regained his feet and was setting himself for another launch.

Dallas grabbed him and flung him into the arms of a cameraman. The cameraman held Bobby's arms. A lightman grabbed his legs.

Dallas and another cameraman got hold of Lynne and pried her loose from Rock, just as she was aiming a right at his teeth.

"Let me at 'im!" Lynne shrieked.

Dallas and the cameraman tugged her away. Rock sprang to his feet, snatched up the fallen skillet, and lunged toward Bobby. A lightman brought him down with a flying tackle.

From a few steps away, Lynne shouted, "Kick 'im in his ugly teeth!" to the cameraman who had tackled Rock.

Dallas clapped a hand over her mouth.

Frustrated, Rock began pounding the floor with his fists.

"Come, come now," Dallas said soothingly. "We're all adults here, we can—" He interrupted

himself, pondered his words, then said, "Well, even so, I still say we can work this out. A momentary flare-up, that's all it was. Tensions. Actors immersed in their parts. Now we can all settle down and be friends again. What ho?"

He removed his hand from Lynne's mouth.

"Kick 'im in the—"

The hand clapped back into place.

"Rock, dear boy," Dallas said, "you're ready to kiss and make up, aren't you?"

"She insulted my teeth!" Rock wept.

Lynne kicked the air—in Rock's direction.

"May I remind you all," Dallas said, "that if we don't finish this picture it can't be distributed. And if it isn't distributed we won't any of us receive our percentages of the net. And if we don't have peace we can't finish the picture."

Rock ceased pounding the floor.

Lynne relaxed in Dallas's hold.

Bobby Freckles spoke up. "We're all adults here," he said. "Surely we can agree to a truce."

"You may release them now," Dallas said to the cameramen and lightmen. At the same time

he removed his hand from Lynne's mouth.

Free, Lynne shrieked, "Horseteeth!" at Rock, then fled, presumably to her dressing room.

Rock shook a fist after her. "Go juggle a grapefruit!"

"Dear boy," Dallas said, "that's your intended whom you're telling to go juggle a grapefruit. Is that diplomatic?"

"Not any more she isn't my intended," Rock growled. "Before I'd marry her, I'd marry . . . I'd marry. . . ." He pointed to Herman Munster. ". . . I'd marry *him!*"

Dallas winced. "Aren't you forgetting about your percentage of the net, dear boy?"

"I'll act with her," Rock said. "But I won't marry her. From now on I'm a free man." He flashed his teeth at Marilyn Munster. "Hello, there. I'm Rock Bound."

Marilyn blushed. "I know. We've met."

Rock walked over to her and, taking her arm and leading her away, said, "You may not have heard, but I'm no longer engaged to a certain party. It's a long story, but if you'd like to hear it. . . ."

They moved out of the range of hearing.

"Stop her!" Grandpa said to Herman. "We don't want those teeth in the family!"

"Oh, leave the young folks alone," Lily broke in. "It's probably those teeth that give him such a nice scream. Anyway, not every man can be perfect." To Dallas, she confided, "After they made Herman they broke the mold."

"I shouldn't wonder," Dallas nodded.

"But I saved the pieces," Grandpa said. "We could glue them together and make another Herman."

"It wouldn't be the same," Lily said stoutly.

"Mrs. Munster," Dallas said, "if I may, may I impose upon your good nature once more? I rather suspect that Lynne, too, is feeling somewhat sour about the prospect of matrimony. Could you talk to her? You're the only other . . . ah, woman . . . present, and I think this rather demands the female approach."

"Well . . . I don't like to interfere. . . ."

"You would be doing us all a great favor. In particular, Lynne and Rock. Actually, they're

very much in love. And they're perfect for each other—obviously. Also, I'm thinking of the institution of marriage. If word leaks out that Lynne and Rock have split, young couples all over the nation will break their engagements."

"Might be an answer to the population explosion," Herman offered.

"Yes, dear boy, but it would be disastrous for the picture. And first things first."

"Well, in that case, yes. Yes, I'll have a talk with her," Lily conceded.

"Thank you, thank you, dear . . . ah, lady," Dallas said as Lily headed in the direction in which Lynne had fled.

Bobby Freckles came up to Dallas. "I suppose you know I'm on overtime," he said.

"You're getting a percentage of the net, chap. There's no overtime when you're on percentage."

"There is if it's written into the contract," Bobby said. "And I always write it into my contracts."

Dallas flagged his arms at the crew. "Shooting is canceled for the day! On the set tomorrow morning, bright and early, please." Then, turn-

ing back to Bobby, he said, "There, now you're on your own time."

Bobby headed for the exit. He had taken no more than a half-dozen steps when a weird howl pierced the air.

"Shhh!" Herman said to Eddie.

"That's not me," Eddie protested.

A dark, enveloping shadow fell across the set. The howl was raised again.

Strong men—everyone present save Herman, Eddie, Grandpa, and Marilyn—covered their eyes and ears fearfully.

Then, as suddenly and mysteriously as the shadow had appeared, it faded.

Dallas peeked out through his fingers. "What was *that?*" he said hoarsely.

"It wasn't me," Eddie insisted.

Herman explained. "That was Spot, Eddie's hound. I think he was howling for his lunch."

"I could have sworn it was a werewolf." Dallas shuddered.

"He picked that up from Eddie," Herman said proudly. "Smart as a whippet."

"Well," Dallas said, "I just hope he didn't frighten any of our stars. They're very sensitive. As you saw, Bobby Freckles is—" He scowled. "Incidentally, where *is* Bobby?"

Eddie raised his eyes toward the ceiling, becoming a picture of innocence.

"He was leaving, I think," Herman said.

"Yes, but he hadn't reached the door when that. . . . Oh, well, I suppose he's somewhere about."

"He'll be back on the set, bright and early tomorrow morning, just like you said," Herman offered.

"Of course. Silly of me to think that. . . ." He shuddered again. "If you'll excuse me, I think I'll lie down for a moment."

When Dallas had gone, Herman said to Eddie, "You'd best feed Spot. He sounded terribly hungry."

"So am I," Eddie said, hurrying away.

"There's comradeship for you," Herman said to Grandpa. "A boy and his dog taking their meals together."

"Exactly what I've been saying," Grandpa grumbled. "We have a nice, normal, happy family. I just hope none of us goes Hollywood and spoils it."

In Lynne East's dressing room, formerly a bedroom in the house that had become a set, Lily Munster was trying to calm the female star of the picture.

"Think of all the happy engagements you'll wreck if you don't marry that nice Rock Bound," Lily said.

Lynne hurled a vase across the room and it shattered against a wall. "Look at all the happy engagements I'll wreck if I *do* marry that ham," Lynne shrieked. "Happy engagements that will turn into *un*happy marriages!"

"If you'd just relax and think for a minute—"

"I am relaxed!" Lynne screamed, looping a hairbrush toward the mirror of the vanity.

The mirror shattered.

"He's the one who's excited!" Lynne screamed. "Did you hear what he almost called me!"

"Well," Lily replied softly, "I heard horseteeth mentioned."

"That's what I mean! You can just imagine what he intended to call me if it made me call him a thing like that! The nerve! A ham like that calling me a thing like that! Me! A lady! I'll never speak to him again! Just think what marriage to a man like that would be like!"

Lily smiled reflectively. "Herman called me a name when we were engaged," she said. "He called me his pallid pal with the funeral parlor pallor."

"The scoundrel!"

"Oh, no. I thought it was nice. It *did* sort of sum me up."

"Oh, I see, a pet name, you mean," Lynne said. "Well, that's all right. But what that ham was thinking was not a pet name. He meant it!"

Still recalling, Lily said, "We had such a happy courtship. We used to take long walks through the cemetery."

"To be alone, you mean?" Lynne said, seating herself in front of the cracked mirror.

"No. To be with our friends."

"You mean your whole clan gathered in the cemetery?" Lynne shook her head in wonder. "And they say the younger generation is wild!"

"Of course, that's not all we did," Lily said defensively. "We were interested in the finer things, too. Some nights we'd just sit around the parlor. Reading. The obituaries."

Lynne looked at her sideways. "You're pulling my leg."

Lily peered around the room. "Grandpa? Are you in here? Stop that!"

Lynne looked, too. "Where? What's he doing?"

"Oh. Well, you said . . . so I thought . . . well, never mind. Where were we?"

Lynne shook her head, as if to rattle her senses back into place. "I'm not sure. Something about your courtship."

"Oh, yes," Lily smiled. "It was idyllic. But marriage is even more so. That's why I think you ought to think twice before you break your engagement. Marriage is just one happy moment after another—if you're married to Herman."

Lynne peered at her doubtfully. "Is it really? Tell me about him . . . about it, I mean."

"Well, of course, we have little Eddie," Lily said. "He's our son." She smiled proudly. "Eddie is a real boy. He and his dog are practically inseparable. Like peas in a pod. Only a few days ago, Herman was saying—"

"Yes, yes," Lynne broke in, "but tell me about Herman."

"Oh. Well, Herman is the perfect husband. So thoughtful. He's always bringing me little surprises—a funeral wreath, material for a new shroud—you know."

"I guess it's the thought that counts," Lynne said dryly.

Lily nodded agreement. "But even more than that, it's the things he *doesn't* do," she said. "For in—"

"Now *that* is interesting," Lynne said. "That's the kind of man I'm looking for. A man who doesn't interrupt me when I'm yelling at him. A man who doesn't think of nasty names to call me while I'm calling him a nasty name." She

sighed blissfully. "You must be very, very happy with a man like that," she said to Lily.

"Well, Herman—"

"Tell me, how did you win him?" Lynne said, leaning forward eagerly.

"Herman? Oh, my, it was very simple. I prepared a special meal for him. The way to Herman's heart is through his stomach."

At that moment, Grandpa entered, walking through a wall. "Not now it isn't," he said. "The way to Herman's heart is through the living room and down into the cellar. I've got it down there doing some repair work on it."

Lynne leaped up. "Don't you knock before you enter a room?"

"Only when it's necessary," Grandpa replied. "First I always look through the wall. If there's somebody inside dressing or something, then I always knock first." To Lily, he said, "Herman's wondering what's keeping you."

Lynne sighed ecstatically. "Isn't that *wonderful!* That marvelous man! *Waiting* for you! That's the kind of husband I want—one who waits."

"You've got the cart before the ham," Grandpa said. "A man doesn't become a ninny until *after* he's married."

"Then I'll be a bachelor girl the rest of my life," Lynne said. "I'm too sensitive and high-strung to suffer through the process of training a man. I'd have to find one who's already trained. I suppose they're all married though." She suddenly brightened. "Now, there's an idea, isn't it?"

"What?" Lily asked.

"Never mind, you poor dear," Lynne purred. She shooed Lily and Grandpa toward the door. "It's been delightful talking to you both," she said. "But I must get my beauty rest now. I have a responsibility to my public. You understand."

"I'll drop by tomorrow to see how you're feeling," Lily said.

"Don't bother, you poor dear. It would be such a strain on you, considering everything. Just drop me a little note someday and I'll send you an autographed picture."

She shoved Lily and Grandpa through the doorway. "Ta-ta."

The door was closed behind them.

"I don't like her," Grandpa said. "For two cents I'd go down in the cellar and—"

"You'll do no such thing," Lily said. "I think she's nice. No one has showed so much interest in Herman since that Dr. What's-his-name came down from Mayo Clinic."

"She's probably got ideas about taking him back to Hollywood with her and turning him into some kind of a Hollywood character."

Lily chewed her upper lip thoughtfully. "She *did* seem awfully interested."

"Why not?" Grandpa said. "They're probably desperate for a fellow with Herman's looks."

Lily smiled. "He might go," she said, "but he'd never stay."

"What makes you so sure?"

"The weather out there," Lily said. "Herman could never stand the climate. I understand it's summer the year round."

Half but not wholly convinced, Grandpa trailed after Lily as she made her way back to the set.

Herman was waiting. He was in a conversation with John Dallas.

"I've called his hotel and he's not there either," Dallas was saying.

"Maybe he's on the way," Herman replied.

"Something?" Lily asked.

Dallas turned to her. "I simply cannot find hide nor hair of Bobby Freckles," he said. "I spoke to the men outside and they didn't see him leave. So I called his hotel, but he hasn't arrived there."

"He's on his way," Herman said again.

"It's only a few blocks from here," Dallas countered. "He could have walked there on his hands by now."

"Where are his parents?" Lily said. "Have you talked to them?"

"Dear lady, Bobby disinherited his parents years ago. The moment he became a star. Incidentally," he said, "did you repair the punctured romance?"

"I relaxed her some," Lily replied. "I think she'll see the light."

Herman flinched. "Lily, I wish you wouldn't use that word."

"Excuse me, dear. I mean I think she'll see the dark," she said to Dallas.

Dallas made some strange strangling noises in his throat.

"One of my pet peeves," Herman explained. "That word just rubs me the wrong way."

Dallas nodded. "Yes, yes, but one problem at a time. Do any of you have any idea where Bobby might have gone?"

"He left about the same time Spot and Eddie did," Herman said. "Maybe he's playing with them."

"Well, if you see him, tell him to be sure and be on the set bright and early tomorrow morning. I have a picture to shoot. And I can't shoot the picture without a child star."

"You could get another, couldn't you?" Herman suggested.

"It would take months of contract negotiation. And, as Mr. Panic says: 'Time is money.' I suppose I should have insisted on a standby for Bob-

by, someone who could step in if he became stubborn."

Little Eddie suddenly materialized.

Dallas peered at him. "Of course," he said. "Why not? Mr. Munster, could I impose on you once more? Could I borrow your son? He could be Bobby's standby."

"Eddie doesn't look a thing like Bobby, thank goodness," Herman said.

"A minor matter, Mr. Munster," Dallas said. "A very minor matter. Makeup can do wonders these days. A dab here and a dab there and Eddie will look more like Bobby Freckles than Bobby does himself. What do you say?"

Herman turned to Eddie. "It's up to you, son."

"This is so sudden," Eddie grinned. "I don't know what to say."

"Say yes, please," Dallas pleaded.

"If you put it that way—"

"Done and done," Dallas glowed. "Munsters, again I am indebted to you. How could I ever finish this picture without you?"

"Quicker, probably," muttered Grandpa.

4

Madness by Moonlight

MOONLIGHT SHINING through the spider webs made delicate patterns on the Munsters' front door.

From inside came a mournful howl—little Eddie baying at the moon.

John Dallas hesitated, then timidly rang the bell. He listened with some apprehension to the chiming of "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You."

After a moment, the door creaked slowly open. Marilyn's pretty face appeared.

"Oh. It's you, Mr. Dallas."

"John, dear. Remember?"

Marilyn blushed. "Do you want to see my uncle?" she asked.

"Great heavens, no. I've come calling on you, my dear. I understand that's the custom in this

barbarous neck of the woods."

Marilyn smiled delightedly. "How nice." She stepped back. "Won't you come in? We're in the parlor."

"We?"

"Mr. Bound is calling on me, too," Marilyn said. "He arrived just a few minutes ago."

Dallas's face fell. "That big ham. He's here?"

"We were just looking through the family album," Marilyn said, leading him to the parlor.

"Frankly, my dear, that's surprising. I rather had the notion that your family suddenly appeared overnight. Instead of maturing in the normal way, don't you know?"

"Not *our* family album," Marilyn said. "*His* family album. He has pictures of his teeth from the age of six months."

Rock Bound, who was seated on the sofa, arose as Marilyn entered the parlor. He reseated himself as Dallas came into view.

"Evening, Rock," Dallas said. "Isn't it a little late for your teeth to be up?"

"Go juggle a grapefruit," Rock retorted.

"No, no, dear boy, you say that to Lynne, not me. I'm the director."

"It's a good line," Rock said. "A good line fits any situation."

Marilyn spoke to Dallas. "Won't you sit down?"

"I will when you do," he smiled.

Rock bounced to his feet. "So will I," he said.

"Well. . . ." Marilyn lowered herself into a chair. Rock perched on the right arm, Dallas on the left arm.

Marilyn peered up at them from the depths of the chair. "I think we'd all be more comfortable on the sofa," she said, arising.

Rock and Dallas tagged at her heels as she crossed the room. As she sat down on the sofa, Rock joined her on her left and Dallas plopped down on her right.

Folding her hands in her lap, sitting stiffly, Marilyn said, "What shall we talk about?"

"I have an amusing story," Rock said.

"I've already heard it," Dallas said.

"Then don't listen," Rock said shortly. "I'll

only tell it to Marilyn." Then, flashing his smile, he said, "It concerns my wisdom teeth. When I was a small child—"

"Which reminds me," Dallas interrupted. "Did either of you see anything of Bobby Freckles after that dratted shadow passed over the set this afternoon? I've searched high and low for him and can't find him anywhere."

"—our family dentist thought my wisdom teeth were coming in crooked," Rock went on. "The whole family was in shock. My mother couldn't do a thing right, she was so upset. I remember she put apricot labels on all the jars of apple jelly. And my father—"

"I suppose I'm responsible for him," Dallas said. "If he's never seen again, Actors Equity will no doubt raise a rumpus. His agent will probably register a complaint, too. I don't know—"

"—my father locked himself in the coal bin for three weeks when he heard about it," Rock continued. "The situation was tense for years, until finally my wisdom teeth straightened themselves out all on their own. Our family dentist

said, 'Pretty clever teeth to do that all by their lonesome.' And I said—"

"—how the picture will turn out without Bobby in the part," Dallas said. "I've asked your little cousin to act as standby. I suppose he *could* play the role—with makeup, of course. But it calls for a real professional sense of viciousness, and although your cousin *seems* right for it, I'm not sure that—"

"—and I said," Rock went on. "I said, 'Of course they're clever teeth. They're *wisdom* teeth, aren't they?' " He chuckled. "Around home the folks are still telling that story. It always gets a laugh."

"What story is that?" Dallas questioned.

Marilyn fluttered her hands nervously. "Wouldn't it be nice," she said, "if we all had some ice cream?"

"Jolly idea!" Dallas beamed.

"Just a nibble for me," Rock said. "I don't want my teeth to catch cold."

Marilyn stood up.

Rock and Dallas also popped to their feet.

"I'm only going to the kitchen," Marilyn said. "I'll be back in a moment."

"I'll sit down if he sits down," Dallas said.

"You first," Rock replied.

"I *said* it first, so you *do* it first."

"Why don't you both remain standing?" Marilyn suggested. "I'll only be a minute."

"I'm agreeable to that," Dallas said.

"All right," Rock said. "But only if it's understood that I wouldn't have sat down first."

Marilyn departed. Rock and Dallas stood glaring at each other.

"I saw her first," Dallas said.

"I was here first tonight," Rock replied.

"But I thought about coming here first."

"What time did you think of it?"

"Five minutes before you did."

"Oh, no, you—"

Marilyn reappeared. "I'm so sorry," she said. "We seem to be out of ice cream. Aunt Lily says that Grandpa took it for one of his experiments. But it isn't far to the ice-cream store, so—"

"He'll go," Dallas said, indicating Rock.

"And leave you alone here with her?" Rock said. "No, sir. I'll go, but only if you go, too."

Marilyn sighed. "I suppose I could go."

"And I'll go with you," Rock said.

"Oh, no! *I'll* go with her."

"Not on your life. If anyone—"

He was interrupted by a creaking sound from the direction of the casket. All three turned toward the sound in time to see Grandpa emerge. He was carrying three dishes of ice cream.

"Thought you folks might want a little snack," Grandpa said amiably.

"Grandpa, you're a lifesaver," Marilyn said.

Grandpa scowled. "I'm just trying to be nice to your guests. No need to get nasty." He began handing out the dishes of ice cream. "One for you," he said, giving a dish to Rock. "And one for you," he said, passing a dish to Dallas. "And Marilyn, this one with the X mark on the rim is for you."

"Decent of you, chap," Dallas said.

Grandpa glared frostily. "One more crack like that. . . ."

Dallas blinked, then shrugged. He tasted his ice cream. "Delicious."

"A bit frigid to the teeth," Rock said, "but good."

"I must say it does have a rather exotic taste—for ice cream," Dallas remarked, tasting again.

"I was just going to say that myself," Rock said. "Only I don't know what exotic means."

"It tastes like plain old ice cream to me," Marilyn said.

"That's what *yours* is," Grandpa informed her.

Dallas suddenly raised his head and howled. It was a melancholy, lingering howl, reminiscent of Eddie baying at the moon.

"Pardon?" said Rock.

"I didn't catch that either," said Grandpa. "But then, I don't understand much dog talk."

Dallas whined, then howled again.

"Grandpa!" Marilyn cried, suddenly understanding.

At that moment, Rock arched his back and hissed. "Sssssst!"

"What a thing to say!" Grandpa said. He

shrugged. "But what can you expect from an alley cat. No breeding."

Dallas put down his ice cream and bounded to the floor. On all fours, he raised his head again and once more sent the melancholy howl winging toward the moon.

Again, Rock hissed—this time in fright. He, too, put his ice cream aside and sprang to the floor. Facing Dallas, he bent his back in a half-circle and hissed a challenge.

"Looks like they want to romp," Grandpa commented.

"Grandpa, do something!" Marilyn cried.

"Would you rather have lions and tigers?" he asked.

Just then Dallas leaped at Rock, fangs bared. He missed. Rock took off, circling the sofa. Dallas bounded after him. Growls and hisses filled the air.

"Out! Scat!" Grandpa waved.

Around and around the sofa went the adversaries. "Arf! Arf!" "Sssssst! Meowrrrrrrw!"

Across the room, Grandpa opened a panel in

the wall. "Here, pussy, pussy, pussy!" he called to Rock.

Sighting escape, Rock scampered across the room, through the opening, and disappeared into the secret passageway.

"He went thataway," Grandpa called to Dallas.

Dallas galloped into the secret passageway.

Grandpa quickly closed the panel. "I think they want to be alone," he said to Marilyn.

"Grandpa! That was mean!" Marilyn said, close to tears. "Why did you do it?"

"Well, I heard that cat and dog fight up here," Grandpa said. "I figured they'd appreciate a chance to get at it in earnest."

A tear rolled down Marilyn's cheek. "Stop them. Please stop them!"

Grandpa suddenly became a bat. Flapping up toward the beams, he called back, "What can a bat do about a dog and cat?"

"Grandpa! Come back!"

"Squeee!" screeched the bat.

"Grandpa! Please! Come—" Marilyn's plea was interrupted by the sound of the door chimes.

Marilyn sighed defeatedly, then went to answer the door. When she opened it she found Lynne East standing there.

"Tell your master that Miss Lynne East is calling, dear," Lynne said.

"My master?"

"Herman Munster, dear."

"He's my uncle."

"Sorry, darling. I thought you were the maid. Natural mistake, don't you think? But, very well, tell your uncle, then, that Miss Lynne East is calling. Where may I wait for him?"

Marilyn escorted Lynne into the parlor. "I met you this afternoon," she said. "I was on the set."

"Oh, were you, darling? I never notice the bystanders. I'm so submerged in my part, you know."

Marilyn left to summon Herman.

A moment after she had gone, the secret panel burst open and Rock came flying out.

"Don't speak to me!" Lynne flared.

"Ssssst! Meowwwwwrrrr!"

Rock raced toward the exit, then disappeared into another part of the house.

"Ham!" Lynne screeched after him.

Now Dallas bounded from the secret passageway.

"Darling," Lynne complained, "you must speak to Rock. He just hissed at me."

"Rowwwwwwwrf!" Dallas answered, galloping in the direction in which Rock had gone.

Lynne put a hand to her brow. "Men!"

Marilyn returned a few moments later, followed by her uncle.

"Do you want to see me, Miss East?" Herman said. "I didn't think you'd even remember me."

Lynne's expression exploded in sincere warmth. "Darling, I *never* forget a fan. What sort of person would I be if I became so submerged in my part that people became mere bystanders to me?"

"Will you excuse me?" Marilyn said.

"With pleasure, darling," Lynne said. "Do hurry."

Marilyn disappeared into the secret passageway.

Lynne took Herman's arm. "Darling," she said, moving him toward the sofa, "I know that

this is a wonderful surprise for you and that you're absolutely speechless. So I'll do the talking. You just listen, like a nice husband. You see, I was talking to your wife—poor woman—this morning. She was telling me what an absolutely perfect dear you are—as a husband, that is. And the thought suddenly struck me that you have a great future in the cinema."

"I don't see—"

"I'll do the talking, darling. You're speechless," Lynne said. "Actually, you have, darling. A really wonderful future in the cinema. For instance, there are actors in Hollywood who have made fortunes playing certain *unusual* parts. And you, darling, could play it without makeup. I know that would mean a lot to the producers. They're always looking for ways to cut costs."

"But—"

"Sh-sh-sh! Of course, one must be an accomplished thespian first, whatever that is. So—"

Rock came racing back through the room. "Meooooooooowrrrrr!" There was terror in his tone now. He dashed for the secret passageway.

"Pay no attention, darling," Lynne said to Herman. "He's an absolute boor."

"He does seem to have changed some," Herman admitted.

Rock disappeared.

"So," Lynne went on, "I have written a script. With my own two fingers—I typed it, and you and I will read it together. You see, I want to be certain that you have acting ability. The bare minimum will do, of course. The part I have in mind is mostly confined to grunting and walking around as if you had just sat down on a dozen rotten eggs."

Dallas came bounding through the room. "Rowwrrrrrrrf!"

"Pay no attention, darling," Lynne repeated.

Dallas darted into the secret passageway.

"Pretend they don't exist," Lynne said. "That's the only way to treat boors."

"Well, they're guests," Herman said. "Maybe I ought to set out a couple bowls of milk."

"It would only encourage them," Lynne said. She pushed a script into Herman's hands. "Read."

Herman looked at the script. "There's only one part."

"Darling, only one person is testing—you. I'm already an actress. I have my Miss Grapefruit citation to prove it. Just read, darling."

Herman read. " 'My darling Lynne East, light of my life, I adore you. You are the moon and the stars. Your eyes are like ploops—' "

"Make that 'pools,' darling. I'm not the best typist."

" 'Your eyes are like pools. Your hair is spun silk. I adore you again. I would gladly give up my wife and family if only you would say the word. The word I want to hear, my darling Lynne East, is—' "

Bobby Freckles came crashing from the secret passageway. He threw himself at Lynne's feet.

"Help! Help!" he cried. "It's after me!"

Lynne glanced down at him disdainfully. "Darling, you're interrupting a reading."

"Hide me! Hide me!" Bobby begged.

"Later, darling. Please, we're busy now. Run along and play your games somewhere else. Go

chase the nice doggy and pussy."

"Hide me! Hide me!" Bobby wailed.

"He's trying to tell us something," Herman said to Lynne.

"I can't possibly think what," Lynne replied. "All he says is 'Hide me! Hide me!' That's the trouble with children; they don't know how to communicate."

"Help! Hide me!" Bobby wailed again.

But that was the last that was heard from him. A dark shadow fell across the room. An animal howl curdled the dimness. Then Bobby Freckles was gone.

Lynne shivered. "What was that? Haven't I heard it before?"

"Oh, don't worry," Herman said. "That was only Spot, Eddie's hound. Or maybe it was Eddie. I guess Bobby must be playing with them. Which reminds me, I better tell Mr. Dallas the next time I see him that Bobby isn't missing anymore."

"Yes, yes, you do that, darling. But right now let's continue with the script. Read on."

Herman found his place, then began reading

again. "The word I want to hear, my darling Lynne East, is 'yes.' Say the word and I will—"

"Yes!" Lynne bubbled. "Yes, my darling, yes, I will marry you!"

"That's the end of the script," Herman said. "How did I do?"

"Darling, you were fantastic! Now, then," she said, abruptly businesslike, "the next step is to notify the papers. And, of course, to break the news to your wife—poor woman. You'll take care of that. I'd do it but I'm just so exhausted. You *will* take care of the details, won't you, darling?"

"Well, sure, I guess so," Herman said. "Though isn't it a little soon to tell the papers?"

"Darling, *that* comes first. *Then* you tell your wife. It must be that way. That's the way it's done. It wouldn't be wise to go to Hollywood with a reputation as a nonconformist. Don't rock the boat, darling."

"Well, if you say so."

"Now, I must leave, darling. My beauty sleep is—"

Rock came bounding from the secret passageway. "Meowwwwrr!"

He tried to hide under the sofa. But he was much too large for the opening.

"Ham!" Lynne threw at him. She whipped around and strode from the parlor.

Herman hurried after her and opened the front door.

"Ta-ta, darling," Lynne gushed, going out. "Don't forget—papers first, wife afterwards."

Herman nodded numbly.

Rock came scrambling into the entrance hall. "Meowwwwwr!"

He raced through the open doorway and disappeared into the night.

Dallas was next. "Rowwwwwwrf!"

He, too, dashed into the darkness.

There was a screech. "Eeeeeeeeeeeek!" Then, "Men!"

Herman shook his head in puzzlement. Then he closed the door and headed up the stairs.

In the parlor, Marilyn emerged from the secret passageway. She looked around helplessly, search-

ing for some sign of Rock and Dallas.

A bat fluttered down from the beams.

"They're gone," the bat cackled. "They just ran out the front door, cat in the lead."

"Grandpa, please, break the spell," Marilyn begged.

The bat became Grandpa. "Don't worry," he said. "It'll wear off by morning. They're safe enough, unless one of them catches the other before daybreak."

Marilyn sighed sadly. "I'll probably never see them again."

"Good riddance."

"But, Grandpa, how often do I have callers?"

"You've got a point there," Grandpa scowled. "If they don't come calling again, there goes my fun." Then a cheerful smile broke through. "In the morning when the spell wears off they won't remember a thing," he said. He patted Marilyn consolingly. "Don't fret. My fun isn't spoiled. They'll be back."

Upstairs, sitting on the edge of one of the twin coffins that served himself and Lily as beds,

Herman told his wife what had occurred after he had gone down to meet Lynne East in the parlor.

"She said to call the papers first," Herman was saying. "But I didn't. The people at the papers would just laugh if I called them and told them I'd passed an acting test."

"First before what?" Lily asked.

"Before I told you."

Lily bristled. "Why did she tell you to do that?"

"It's the way they do it in Hollywood," Herman explained.

"Oh," said Lily, mellowing. "It's one of her native customs. I guess she just doesn't understand that we do things differently around here." Lily sighed wearily, then got in under the shroud that covered her coffin. "I hope you didn't take that acting test too seriously, Herman."

Herman did not answer.

"Herman . . . ?"

"Well, Lily, I *could* do well in Hollywood, you know."

Lily sighed again, resignedly this time. But she said no more.

5

Trouble for Dallas

WHEN JOHN DALLAS came onto the set bright and early the next day at noon, the crew and Herman and Lily Munster and Marilyn had been there for hours. The stars, however, had not yet arrived.

"Frightful night," Dallas explained to the Munsters and Marilyn. "Horrible dream. I'd tell you about it, but you wouldn't believe it."

Marilyn lowered her eyes.

"Tell us," Lily urged. "Was it really horrible? We haven't heard a horrible dream in ages."

"Please," Dallas said, holding his head, "let's not start that again." Then, to Marilyn, he said, "I *did* come calling on you last night, didn't I?"

"Yes," Marilyn replied meekly.

"In what sort of mood was I when I left?"

"Frisky," Marilyn murmured.

The word apparently brought back memories. Dallas again clapped his hands to his head.

Rock Bound appeared. He looked as if he had aged a number of years overnight. But the instant he spotted Dallas he regained at least the springiness of his step. He leaped back behind the doorway, then peered out cautiously.

"For heaven's sake, this is no time for childish games," Dallas said. "Come out from behind there."

"Promise you won't bite?" Rock said.

"Bite? Bite? Why would I—" Dallas suddenly understood. "You mean you had the same dream?"

Rock inched out from cover. "You, too?" He shuddered. "It was horrible, wasn't it?"

"Well, tell us, tell us," Lily pleaded. "Won't one of you tell us?"

"You wouldn't believe it," Rock said.

A new voice entered. "My advice is, don't believe *anything* that ham tells you." Lynne came through the doorway.

Rock shook a fist at her. "Just once more!"

"See! See!" Lynne screeched at Dallas. "He threatened me! I'm not safe on this set! I come over here, brimming with the milk of human kindness, and what do I get? Threatened!"

"Don't threaten your leading lady, dear boy," Dallas admonished Rock.

"Did you hear what she called me? Her! Her, calling *me* names! Miss Grapefruit Rind, 1965!"

Lynne smiled at Herman. "Didn't I tell you, darling? He's a boor. Come, let's go somewhere where we can have some privacy."

She led Herman away.

"That's *my* Herman," Lily objected.

"Please, let him go," Dallas said. "It will keep her away from Rock. Anything for peace."

Leading Herman to the far side of the set, Lynne said, "What happened, darling? I read every column in the morning papers—twice—and there's not one word in them about us. And your wife—that poor woman—so cheerful. Did you tell her that you're divorcing her?"

Herman stared at Lynne blankly. "Why would I tell her that?"

"Darling, don't you remember? Last night. We agreed. You told me you loved me. All those sweet words—and every word of it the absolute truth. You said you'd be glad to give up your wife and family if only I'd say the word. And I said it. Remember?"

"That?" said Herman, stepping back. "That was acting."

Lynne saw the terror in his expression. "Oh, you didn't understand that. . . ." She peered at him narrowly for a second, then said, "Yes, darling, of course it was acting. I was just teasing."

Herman sighed, relieved. "You sure had me scared there for a second."

"I'm sorry."

"Oh, no. It was a great feeling. But I don't know what I'd do without Lily."

"Much better, darling, that's what you'd do."

"Pardon?"

"Never mind, darling. Darling, your wife—that poor woman—said something about you yesterday. I wonder if it's true. She said that the way to your heart is through your stomach. True?"

Herman shook his head.

"Oh . . . too bad."

"The way to my heart is through the parlor and down into the basement," Herman said. "Grandpa has it down there doing some work on the—"

"Darling, I didn't mean that literally—whatever 'literally' means. What I meant was, you have an immense fondness for food. Is that correct?"

"I wouldn't say that," Herman frowned. "I rarely eat between snacks. Except at meals, of course."

Lynne glowed. "She was right. Darling," she said, "I want you to do something for me. For yourself, actually. I want you to read with me again this evening."

"Do you think I need to?" Herman said, disappointed. "I thought I had the acting business pretty much licked."

"No, I think you definitely need another session, darling," Lynne said. "One can never be *too* experienced."

"Well, if you say so. You come over again tonight, and we'll have another—"

"No, darling, not at your house. Too many distractions, all those cats and dogs. We'll meet right here."

"Here? In the kitchen?"

"This is the perfect place, darling. And please, do not eat before you come." She smiled. "I'll have a snack for you."

"I usually eat before having a snack," Herman said.

"Force yourself not to, darling. It's for your art. One 'thesps' much more competently—whatever that means—on an empty stomach."

"Well, if it's for art. . . ."

"Wonderful! It's agreed then. We'll meet here."

"All right," Herman nodded. "Right now, though, we'd better get back. Lily is looking over this way."

"If you insist, darling. But you must promise to protect me from that horrid Rock Bound."

"He looks tame enough to me," Herman said.

"Now, yes. But he won't be once I've called him a ham a few more times. He'll be livid, the beast!"

As Lynne and Herman approached the others, Dallas called out to Lynne. "We're ready to shoot, dear. All we're missing is our child star. I suppose I'll have to use his standby."

"That reminds me," Herman said. "We saw Bobby last night. He was at our house, playing some kind of a game with Eddie and Spot. Hide-and-seek, I think. He came running into the parlor and wanted Miss East to hide him."

"That pest!" Dallas said. "Where is he now?"

"Speaking of pests," Lynne said, "I certainly would hate to be a ham."

"Let me at her!" Rock exploded.

"No one's stopping you, dear boy," Dallas pointed out.

"Then stop me!" Rock raged.

Dallas waggled a finger at him. "Don't do that, dear boy."

"You saved her life," Rock said, calming down. "I'd have smashed her."

"Speaking of being smashed," Lynne said, "that's better than being a—"

Dallas clamped a hand over her mouth. To

Rock he said, "Try to ignore her, dear boy. If you get your dander up you'll start gnashing your teeth. And there goes your career."

"That's right," Rock said fearfully. "Okay, let her go. I'll ignore her."

Dallas removed his hand from Lynne's mouth.

"—big ham."

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me," Rock said.

"Let me at 'im!" Lynne shrieked, raising her fists and flying at Rock.

Dallas held her back. "Not now," he pleaded. "We're ready to shoot. Here comes Bobby."

They all turned. A redheaded, freckle-faced boy had just walked onto the set.

Dallas forgot that he was relieved to see his child star. He released Lynne and stormed toward Bobby, shaking an admonishing finger. "Where have you been? I called your hotel. I searched the grounds. Nowhere. And now I hear you've been playing games with that Munster child."

"How could that be?" replied the redheaded,

freckle-faced boy. "I *am* that Munster child."

"Eddie!" Lily giggled. "Is that you?"

"I don't believe it," Herman said. "You're the spittin' image of Bobby Freckles."

"Makeup," Eddie explained.

"I knew it all along," Lily said. "A mother always knows her own child."

"That settles it," Dallas said. "Bobby is off the picture and Eddie is on. As a matter of fact, I think Eddie will be better for the part. He has sharper teeth."

"He keeps them filed," Lily said proudly. "Every night, without fail, it's 'Up to bed, Eddie, and don't forget to wash your face and file your teeth.' " She giggled again. "I'm beginning to sound like a regular stage mother."

"Yes . . ." Dallas murmured dimly. "Well, onto the set, all. We're shooting an exterior today."

The Munsters and the stars, with Dallas in the lead, trooped toward the out-of-doors.

In his cellar workshop, Grandpa Munster was bending over a beaker of bubbling bluish liquid

that was heating over a burner.

"It's coming to a boil," he reported to his pet bat, Igor. "That's what the recipe said, wasn't it? 'Bring to a boil, then add the horns of one horned toad, the toenails of one gila monster, the blossoms from a deadly nightshade, and salt to taste.' Drat it, I never know what they mean by that—salt to taste. *Whose* taste?" He glanced up at Igor. "Want to test it?"

"Eeeeeek!" answered Igor.

"Bah! You old bat!"

Grandpa began rummaging through the drawers of a cabinet.

"Now where are those horned toad horns?" he muttered. "I'll bet Lily's been cleaning up down here again. I can never find a thing after she's been in here with her duster. A man's home is his laboratory, don't she know that?"

"Squeak."

"Don't tell her I said that," Grandpa grumbled.

"Eeeeeek!"

"Stool pigeon!" Then he brightened. "Ah, here they are." He blew on the horned toad horns.

HORN TO
HORNS
GILA
TOE

"Little dusty. I guess she wasn't at them, after all."

Grandpa dropped the horned toad horns into the beaker. The liquid flared up. Then he added the gila monster toenails and the blossoms of deadly nightshade.

Once more the liquid flared, then settled down to a steady bubbling.

Grandpa clucked happily. "Got a good do on it this time," he said. Addressing Igor once more, he said, "Know what I'm cooking up?"

"Squeak!"

"You'll listen, anyway, you poor excuse for an airborne mouse. I'm going to rid the neighborhood of those Hollywood characters. Run 'em off, that's what."

"Eeeeeek!"

"You can say that again. I suppose you want to know how, eh?"

"Squeak."

"You're gonna hear, anyway, you tin-eared canary. I'm gonna blow 'em up!"

"Squeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

"Don't get so excited! I don't mean them. I mean their cameras."

"Squeak."

"Did you see what happened when Herman popped his head out onto the set the other day? Camera blew up. Exploded." He winked. "Guess what's gonna happen the next time *I* show up on the set. *All* the cameras, that's what. Every last one of them. Explode. Boom! Biggest boom that's been seen around here since I set off that firecracker that made the mushroom cloud. Remember that?"

"Squeak!"

"Bigger than that even."

"Eeeeeeeek."

"Then tuck your head under your wing," Grandpa said. "Because it's gonna happen. Soon as this brew is ready here." He cackled joyously. "Can't shoot a movie picture without cameras, I guess."

"Eeeeeek!"

"Ah, it won't be that bad. They can get more cameras when they get back to Hollywood. But

they won't do any more shooting around here." He dipped a fingertip into the bubbling bluish liquid, tasted, then said, "Done to a turn."

He lowered the fire under the beaker, then selected three bottles from an overhead shelf.

One of the bottles was labeled "Dracula," the other, "Mr. Hyde," and the final bottle, "The Blob."

Grandpa dropped a pinch of sandy-looking ingredients from each of the bottles into the liquid.

There was a rumbling and churning inside the beaker.

"Hope I didn't overdo it," Grandpa muttered. "I'd hate to go up in a mushroom cloud myself."

"Eeeek!"

Grandpa stirred the liquid. He sniffed the odor. "Little heavy on the Mr. Hyde," he said. "Maybe I better cut it with a little Dr. Jekyll."

"Squeeeee!"

"Yeah, you're right—a little too much Mr. Hyde never hurt nobody. None of *us,* leastways."

Grandpa put the stirring spoon aside.

"This is it," he said to Igor.

Igor covered his eyes with his wings and screeched, "Eeeeeek!"

In the meantime, the stars and the Munsters had collected outside the house, where the crew had already set up the lights and cameras.

"Behind the cameras, please, Munsters," Dallas said. "My producer, Daryl S. Panic, has a saying: 'Cameras cost money.' "

When Herman, Lily, and Marilyn were in what Dallas considered a safe location, he addressed his stars, Rock, Lynne, and now, Eddie.

"This is another homecoming scene, dear ones," he said. "In this instance, however, Rock will be arriving at the front door. A little variety never hurt any script—what?"

"There's always something new to learn," Rock grumbled.

Dallas went on. "In the previous scene," he said, "which we will shoot a few weeks from now, the police will have called at the house, asking for Rock. It seems—"

"Wait a minute," Rock said. "You mean that's

already happened? The police have already come to the house?"

"In the script, yes. Actually, we haven't shot that scene yet."

"Why don't we do that one first?" Rock suggested.

Lynne groaned.

"Dear boy," Dallas said, "it's traditional to shoot at random, you know that."

Rock shook his head. "I didn't know that."

"Dear boy, in your previous pictures, didn't you notice that the scenes were shot out of order?"

"I just thought the pictures didn't make any sense," Rock said.

"Idiot!"

"Sticks and stones—"

"Never mind!" Dallas broke in. "May we proceed, please? Now, as I was saying, the police have called at the house, asking for Rock. It seems that some buttinski at the bank has noticed that Rock is bringing home samples. The police have come to arrest him. However, upon arrival, they find that Rock is not home. They wait around

a while. Then their leader, a lieutenant, remarks that instead of wasting their time waiting for a bank embezzler they should be out giving traffic tickets to people who drive through stoplights that have been obscured by telephone poles. Are you with me so far?"

"I didn't listen after you said I wasn't home," Rock said. "Was there anything after that about me?"

"No, dear boy. Now, as the scene opens, the police have departed, and Rock— Rock! Pay attention, dear boy, we're back to you. Rock has returned, has parked his car in front, and is approaching the entrance. Do you understand that, Rock?"

"Up the walk?"

"Exactly. Now, his loyal family—that's you and Eddie, Lynne—his loyal family meets him at the door. You are enraged. He has brought disgrace to the family name. You attack. Lynne, you begin pelting Rock with garbage—the garbage you've been saving, remember? And, Eddie, you'll more or less have to ad-lib. But I'm sure

you'll think of something. Are we all clear on that now?"

"Sure," said Eddie, obviously eager to begin.

"Is that clean garbage?" Lynne asked. "I have to think of my nails."

"The cleanest, darling," Dallas replied. "This is a big budget picture." He sighed. "All right, now, on the set."

Rock went to the car that had been parked at the curb.

Lynne and Eddie took up positions at the front door of the house, where a basket of sterilized garbage had been placed.

Dallas joined the Munsters behind the cameras. "This will be the scene that sells the picture," he said, chuckling. "Lynne belts Rock with garbage. The audiences will love it."

The Munsters exchanged looks of puzzlement.

"Oh, that's very funny," Dallas assured them. Then, no longer quite so certain, he said, "At least, it always has been before. This is all surefire material, taken from other pictures, each one a smash hit."

As one, the Munsters smiled feebly.

"Each one a critical hit, too," Dallas said. "Ah . . . money-wise, that is." He faced back to the set. "Ready, all?"

Lynne shrugged.

Rock showed his teeth.

Eddie nodded happily.

Dallas spoke to the chief cameraman. "I want you to pan the complete set first," he said. "That will establish the out-of-doors locale. Linger momentarily on the false front—the wooded area, the game preserve, and so on. Then slowly zero in on the actors. You'll have time, as it's a fairly long walk to the house. What?"

"Got it," replied the cameraman.

"Ready, all?"

"Ready already!" Lynne said crossly.

"Cameras!"

"Rolling."

"Action!"

Rock moved away from the car and walked toward the house. Lynne reached into the basket for a handful of garbage. Eddie gnashed his teeth.

"Panning . . ." reported the chief cameraman.

"Good, good. Get that—"

At that moment an automobile pulled up in front of the false front.

"What's that?" Dallas asked curiously. "Is that in the script?"

"No, sir," replied the chief cameraman.

"Cut!" Dallas screeched, clutching his Alpine beanie in monumental frustration.

All four doors of the automobile opened and a man and a woman and seven children piled out. They were all dressed in casual clothes, and the woman was carrying a picnic basket.

Dallas went stomping over to them. "You can't do this!" he bellowed. "We're shooting!"

The family stared at him as if he were mad.

At the same time, the chief cameraman called over to Dallas. "Your actors," he said, "they didn't hear you."

Dallas looked back.

Rock was still striding toward the house. Now Lynne, struggling with the basket of garbage and followed by Eddie, had struck out to meet him.

"Cut! Cut, cut, cut!" Dallas shouted.

To no avail.

Dallas faced the family again. "Out!" he commanded. "You can't park here!"

"And why not?" replied the man belligerently. "This is a public park, isn't it? Look at that. Don't tell me that's not a public park. If I can't park in a public park, where can I park? I'm a taxpayer."

"It isn't a park!" Dallas raged. "It isn't even there. You just think it's there. It's painted." He whirled back toward the set. "Cut! For heaven's sake, cut!"

Lynne and Eddie and Rock were only feet apart. And they kept going.

"I say it's a public park," roared the man of the family. "And as a taxpayer, I have the right to—"

A piercing shriek came from the direction of the house.

Dallas whipped around. He and the family stared.

The stars had met in mortal combat. Rock was down. Lynne had dumped the basket of clean

garbage over his head. Eddie was clawing his way through the garbage toward Rock's face.

"Cut! Cut! Cut!" Dallas wailed.

"Come on," the man said to his family. "We started on a picnic, and we're *going* on a picnic!"

The family stomped toward the false front.

"Stop!" Dallas yelled after them. "Cut!" he screamed, turning back to the set. "Cut! Stop! Stop! Cut!"

The family did not stop. The actors did not cut.

"Cameras!" Dallas moaned.

"Rolling."

"No, no! I mean, yes, no . . . I don't know *what* I mean!" he sobbed.

Dallas sat down on the ground and began to weep.

Behind the cameras, Herman was churning with excitement. "I could do that," he said to Lily, pointing to the action on the set. "There's nothing to this acting business. All you have to do is hit each other!"

"Dear, I know it looks easy," Lily said. "But

it's probably like optical surgery—there's more to it than meets the eye. After all, you've had only one lesson."

"I could do it," Herman insisted. "Look, she's pounding him with the basket. And Eddie's twisting his leg. I could do both at once."

Lily sighed. "Well, I guess you won't be satisfied till you try it," she said, giving permission.

Herman raced onto the set. He flung himself into the air, aimed in the direction of Rock Bound.

A number of things occurred simultaneously.

The camera that was covering the battle exploded in a shower of sparks and hisses.

Rock went, "Ooooooooof!"

Lynne mistook the new leg, Herman's, for an old leg, Rock's. She twisted its foot viciously. The foot came off in her hands. She stared at the foot, puzzled, then rammed it back into place. Whereupon she grabbed another foot—Rock's this time—and resumed twisting, with more conventional results.

In the scramble, Eddie suddenly recognized his father.

"Hi there, Dad!" he called out.

But Herman did not hear. He had another landing in mind, and once more he had launched himself into the air.

"Ooooooooof!"

Not far away, the family, with the man still in the lead, had reached the false front. Indignation carried them blindly forward. Through the flat they went, ripping a large opening in the game preserve.

As they disappeared through the hole, Dallas began pounding the ground with his fists, in full tantrum. "Cut!" he screamed. "Oh, please, cut! Someone, please, please, please, cut!"

As if in response, the picnickers suddenly reappeared. Their faces were ashen. They piled out of the rupture in the false front, tumbling over one another, then scrambled to their feet and raced for the car.

Dallas interrupted his tantrum to observe, fascinated.

The family heaved itself into the automobile. The engine purred to action. Four doors slammed

shut. The car roared away.

Dallas looked back toward the false front.

Then he understood.

A creature appeared in the opening made by the picnickers. Dallas was not sure whether it represented Dracula, Mr. Hyde, or The Blob. It seemed to be a mixture of all three.

Behind Dallas a camera exploded. Then another, then another.

He peered toward the set. It looked like the Fourth of July. The set was lighted with flashes of flame, punctuated with pops and bangs and hisses.

Dallas sighed resignedly. He looked back toward the false front. The creature had disappeared, as if its purpose had been accomplished.

Again Dallas swiveled his attention toward the set. The battle was still raging. Herman Munster was in midair, descending toward Rock's midsection. Lynne seemed to be trying to disengage Rock's foot from his leg. Eddie was still fighting his way through the garbage. A sullen smoke hung over the cameras.

In a daze, Dallas arose and walked toward the cameras.

Lily and Marilyn were contentedly observing the battle.

"I say, chap," Dallas said to Lily, "did you see what I just saw—over at the false front?"

"Chap?" replied Lily.

"Sorry, chap—I mean, dear lady. The oddest thing. I was lying there, having a tantrum, and suddenly Count Dracula, Mr. Hyde, and The Blob appeared. Except, of course, that they weren't three. They were one."

Lily looked at him sideways. "I think you had better lie back down, Mr. Dallas. You look a little strange."

Dallas sighed wearily. "My imagination, I suppose." He turned toward the battle.

Lynne was trying to stuff Rock into the basket that had once held the garbage.

"Someone ought to stop that," Dallas said dimly. "The whole business is pointless—the cameras aren't rolling."

"Don't you think Herman is doing a workman-

like job?" Lily commented.

"Yes, yes, excellent. Great talent. Born actor."

"Eddie's very good, too," Marilyn said. "Except that the others won't give him much of a chance. They're in the way."

"Upstaging," Dallas said. "I suppose I really ought to speak to them," he said. Then he brightened momentarily. "I'll have the cameramen break it up. They have nothing else to do, anyway."

"It seems a shame," Lily said. "They're all having such a good time."

"I suppose so. But then, we're not making a cent on it. And my producer, Daryl S. Panic, has a saying—which I can't recall at the moment." He turned to the chief cameraman. "I say, would you pull the actors apart, please."

"Check!"

The cameramen, led by their chief, rushed onto the set to halt the battle.

Dallas looked on, bemused. Then, speaking to Lily and Marilyn, he said, "I think I'll faint now."

He did.

6

Lily Sounds a Warning

THE MUNSTER PARLOR was abnormally quiet. Moisture could be heard dripping from the walls and ceilings, of course, and the gloom was still audible to an extent. But there were no reverberating footfalls, and the door chimes had been stuffed with newspaper to keep them silent.

John Dallas was supine on the sofa, still deep in his faint.

The quiet had been ordered on his behalf. It was felt that he needed a great deal of rest.

But the show had to go on.

Marilyn came tiptoeing into the parlor. She was carrying a bowl of liquid. She paused, looked down at Dallas sympathetically, then placed the bowl on a nearby table.

"John," Marilyn whispered.

His eyes opened.

Marilyn smiled. "I've brought you some cold soup," she said.

His eyes closed. He shook his head, as if trying to dispel a bad dream. "I thought you said *cold* soup," he murmured.

"Yes, I—"

He put up a hand. "No, no, don't say it. I want to think that I'm recovered." His eyes opened again. "Did they stop the fight?"

"Oh, yes," Marilyn assured him. "Hours ago."

"Thank goodness for *that!*" Dallas pushed himself up into a sitting position. "Dear girl," he said, "may I ask you a very important question? Did you, by any chance, see Mr. Hyde, Count Dracula, and The Blob on the set today?"

"I don't think you'd better get up just yet," Marilyn said.

Dallas clapped his hands to his head. "I knew it! I've gone stark raving mad!"

"Oh, no, no," Marilyn said. "I'm sure they were there—if you say so. I probably just didn't notice them. You know how it is—people you see all the time, you don't notice in a crowd."

"Yes." Dallas nodded woefully. "I *am* going mad. I thought you just said— Well, never mind." He got groggily to his feet. "Still, I must carry on. That's the tradition."

"You still look weak."

"I am," Dallas said, sinking back to the sofa.

"Have some cold soup."

"Thank you, no. I already have a bad case of the chills." He furrowed his brow. "My cameras . . . they exploded, didn't they? And your uncle was on the set again. That's the explanation, of course. Something must be done about that."

"Uncle Herman is hoping you'll give him a part in the picture," Marilyn said.

"I intend to do that," Dallas replied. "In fact, I have the perfect part for him. I'm going to assign him the role of guarding the false front from picnickers."

"But I think he had in mind—"

"Dear girl, I must think of my cameras first. Every time he appears in front of them they explode. Besides, there's no reason why he can't act while he's guarding the false front. He can act

like a guard. It will be good experience for him. Like a season in summer stock, you know."

"Well, if it's explained to him the right way. . . ."

"Of course. But later. Now I have to send for more cameras. And get the false front repaired."

"But you need rest."

"No rest for the wicket, dear—British expression, you know."

"I'll worry about you," Marilyn said worriedly.

Dallas smiled. "How dear of you, dear girl." He took one of her hands. "May I speak frankly? I have developed a great affection for you, my dear. You are the one bright and shining light in this otherwise dark and ghastly affair."

Marilyn blushed, lowering her eyes.

"Have you ever considered a Hollywood career?" Dallas asked. "It strikes me that I ought to do something nice for you, and that's the one gift that I have it in my power to give."

"I've never thought about it," Marilyn said.

"Dear girl, we must discuss it. But not here, not now. So much to be done, you know. I wonder

. . . would you meet me this evening?"

"You mean here?"

"Not exactly. I had a very unfortunate dream after I left here the last time. I'd rather avoid that, if possible. Would you meet me, say, next door? On the set?"

"Well . . . without a chaperone?"

"I am the soul of virtue, my dear."

"Well. . . ."

"I would advise it," Dallas urged. "It could mean a whole new life for you. Excitement, adoration, all that Hollywood has to offer."

"I don't know, John. Without a chaper—"

"Then it's settled. This evening. Next door. When the sun goes down, I will show up. I do hope you'll be there, my dear."

"But—"

But Dallas was already on his way to the exit.

When Dallas was gone, Marilyn pondered the invitation she had just received. John Dallas was charming, and so different, but. . . .

But no chaperone.

She arose and went to the desk and got out

notepaper and a pen. Then, seated at the desk, she began to write:

Dear John:

That was as far as she got. She was interrupted by a muffled rendition of "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You."

Marilyn hurried to the door. She removed the stuffing from the chimes. Then she tugged the door open.

Rock Bound was standing there, his teeth in full array.

"Hi," he said. "It's me."

"Yes, I see."

"Marilyn," Rock said anxiously, "I have to talk to you. This thing has been on my mind ever since we met. It's a tremendous burden. I can't sleep nights. I keep dreaming I'm a pussycat. I must speak."

"Yes?"

"Not now," Rock said. "It can wait. But I have to talk to you soon—like tonight, say."

"Well, I'm not sure that—"

"I have it all worked out," Rock said. "We'll meet at sundown. On the set. Will you?"

"Without a chaper—" She suddenly smiled. "Why, yes. Yes, if that's what you want."

"Wonderful!" Rock beamed. "Guess what I want to talk to you about!"

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"A Hollywood career!"

"Oh. Well, that's nice. Since we were going to discuss that anyway."

"We were?" Rock said. "Feminine intuition. It never ceases to amaze me." Then, backing off, he said, "I have to run. The dentist gave my teeth a cleaning, and I don't think they ought to be out in the air right after a bath."

Marilyn waved good-bye. After closing the door, she returned to the parlor. She tore up the note she had started. Now it was perfectly safe to go to the house next door. She would have two chaperones.

In the kitchen, Herman Munster idly watched his wife run an onion through a slicer that looked

remarkably like a miniature guillotine. He was wondering how it would be best to break the news that he would not be home for dinner.

A tear rolled down Lily's cheek.

"Feminine intuition," Herman muttered. "It never ceases to amaze me. How do you know these things? I haven't said a word and you're crying already."

"It's the onions," Lily explained. Then, looking at him suspiciously, she said, "You haven't told me what?"

"Well, now that you mention it—that I won't be home for dinner."

Lily's expression darkened. "Has it come to this, Herman?"

"Come to what?" Herman said innocently.

"That's always the way it starts. A man stops coming home to dinner. Or when he goes to walk the dog he's gone for three hours. And eventually his wife finds out that he wasn't working late at the office, he wasn't walking the dog—he's seeing *someone else*."

Herman snorted. "This isn't that at all. I'm going for another acting lesson. Miss East has arranged for us to use the movie set." He reached out and picked up one of the onions that Lily had not yet peeled and popped it into his mouth. "Good," he said, biting down. "You know, peeling them robs them of the vitamins. I read that somewhere."

"Don't change the subject," Lily said. "Why can't you practice acting *after* dinner? And here. Here in our parlor."

"Miss East says actors act better on an empty stomach," Herman explained, breaking off the end of a loaf of bread and tossing it in with the onion. "And I guess our parlor doesn't have the right atmosphere. This script we're reading is a tragedy—all about love. And how could we be tragic in a comfy, cozy place like our parlor?"

Lily studied her husband thoughtfully for a moment. Then she went to the refrigerated vault and returned with a side of beef. Wrestling it onto the chopping block, she said, "I just don't like it."

"Then why'd you drag it out here?" Herman said. "There's still all that mutton left. You like mutton."

"I'm not talking about this," Lily said, beginning to carve. "I'm talking about that Hollywood . . . that Hollywood. . . ."

"You're getting to sound like Grandpa."

". . . that Hollywood husband-snatcher!"

"Now, Lily—" Herman began.

"I don't like her getting you over there alone," Lily interrupted. "I think she has designs."

"She looks healthy enough to me," Herman said. "Though those rosy cheeks and bright eyes probably do indicate something. I doubt if it's designs, though. Probably only a summer cold." He lobbed another unpeeled onion into his mouth. "Is designs catching?"

"I mean," Lily said, "I think she's looking for a husband."

"Nonsense. Why doesn't she marry that Rock Bound fellow if that's what she wants?"

"He's not a husband, he's a bachelor."

"Oh," Herman replied, not certain that he

understood. He picked up a thigh that Lily had carved from the side of beef and began munching on it.

"How can you eat like that and keep an empty stomach?" Lily asked.

"I'm not eating, I'm picking."

"Do you understand what I'm saying, Herman? I think you're the husband she's looking for."

Herman was buttering what remained of the loaf of bread. "Now that *is* nonsense," he said. "If that was what she was up to, she'd have said something about it by now. All she's ever talked about is my acting career. Just this afternoon she told me she thought it was marvelous the way I pitched in in that fight scene. She said I landed on Rock Bound like a real pro. She said she'd never seen acting she enjoyed more."

"Buttering you up," Lily sniffed.

"No, I think she just knows talent when she sees it."

"She must never have looked in a mirror, then."

"Lily, you're jealous. If she can't act, how did she get picked as Miss Grapefruit?"

"Because she's an oversize lemon."

"All right, if you don't think this is on the up-and-up, I'll tell you what. You come along. Come along with me and you can watch."

"I wouldn't *think* of it!" Lily said indignantly. "And let that creature think I'm jealous? Not on your death!"

Herman shrugged. "That's the only thing I can suggest. Unless. . . ."

"Yes?"

"You could watch us through the window."

"Hmmmph!"

"Why don't you?" Herman said. "I'd feel better about it if you did. I wouldn't worry about your worrying about what's going on."

"Well, maybe," Lily said. "I might casually pass by the window sometime this evening. Not because I'm worried, though. Understand?"

Herman nodded. "I understand." He headed for the door. "I better get going," he said. "The sooner this is over with, the sooner I can get back home and eat. I'm starved."

7

Pydogie Problems

HERMAN OBSERVED as he left his home that the sun was just about to dip below the horizon. He paused to savor the exquisite sight—exquisite to him because it was the beginning of darkness.

After a moment, however, the urgency of getting the acting lesson over with so he could get back to dinner drove him on.

Reaching the front door of the house that had become a movie set, he noticed that the house was dark inside. He was pleased.

"I guess she's expecting me," he said to himself. "Nice of her to leave the lights off."

Herman entered. But the instant he stepped inside he was met by a blaze of light. The kitchen door had opened, revealing Lynne East, and the lights were on in the kitchen.

"Can't we turn the lights out?" Herman said.

"Darling, I tried that routine and it didn't work," Lynne said, coming toward him. "I've made up my mind to give your wife's system a chance."

"What's Lily—"

"Don't interrupt while I'm plotting, darling. Just relax. It will be over soon." She took Herman's hand. "Come along, darling. I was just about to start preparing the food."

"But you said—"

"Don't pay any attention to what I *said,* darling. It's what I *say* that counts. You are hungry, aren't you? See? Wasn't that thoughtful of me to ask? But it's only fair. I know how you adore eating, and I'm taking you away from dinner. So, in all fairness, I'm making a snack for you."

"Well, if that don't beat all," Herman said, happily surprised. "I'd never guess that a Hollywood star like you could cook, too. They don't seem to go together."

"I will admit that cooking isn't exactly my specialty," Lynne said. "But I'm fortunate in not

being the only extremely talented person in my family. My grandmother, you see, was once the chief chef for the Yugoslav army."

"Imagine—"

"Don't interrupt, darling. So, when I decided to go ahead with this horrible ordeal of actually cooking a meal, naturally I wired Grandmother. I asked her for her most tasty recipe, and, naturally again, she sent it to me by return wire. Along with a birthday greeting, incidentally."

"Congratulations," Herman said.

"It isn't my birthday, darling. Grandmother sent the recipe in the form of a birthday greeting because it's less expensive that way. She's very frugal. She just can't get it into her head that she no longer has to live on her army salary."

"I knew an army fellow once who claimed he had plenty of money," Herman reflected. "A Major André. He wore an American Revolutionary War uniform, but he claimed he'd got the money from the British. He couldn't prove it, though. Where he was, they wouldn't let him bring it with him."

"Don't babble on like that, darling," Lynne said. "It doesn't become a man." She pushed on through the swinging door that led to the kitchen. "In here, darling."

Herman blinked painfully as he stepped into the light. When his eyes became accustomed to the glare, he blinked again.

"What's all that?" he asked.

He was referring to the huge sacks of flour, bags of onions, gallon containers of milk, and cartons of butter and eggs that were stacked neatly against the walls.

"Those are the ingredients, darling," Lynne explained. "Grandmother's recipes are meant to feed thousands. This recipe is for pydogie. It's a fabulous Slovak delicacy. The army was simply mad about it. And its charm is that it's so simple to prepare. You just mix all the flour, milk, butter, onions, and eggs together and bake until golden brown."

Herman nodded numbly. "Bake."

"Yes, that's the problem," Lynne said, scowling. "I've been searching for the oven ever since

I arrived, but it doesn't seem to be here."

"This is one of those built-in kitchens," Herman explained. "I remember when our neighbors had it installed. They had to keep calling the appliance store to ask where the dishwasher was."

"But they cooked, didn't they? So there must be a stove here somewhere."

"Funny thing about that," Herman said. "As I recall, the stove did its own cooking. Even chose the menus, if I remember right. Our neighbors weren't very happy about that. The stove kept serving them meat every evening and they were all vegetarians."

"Well," Lynne said, undaunted, "we'll just have to attack this logically. I'll keep searching for the stove, and you begin peeling the onions."

"When you peel onions you throw away half the vitamins," Herman said.

"Darling, this is a Yugoslav recipe. What does the Yugoslav army care about vitamins? Just start peeling."

Herman sighed. "Well, if that's what it takes to be an actor. . . ."

In his cellar workshop, Grandpa Munster was rocking comfortably in his electric rocker, a pair of earphones clamped to his head. An expression of utter disgust resided on his face.

Igor, Grandpa's pet bat, soared down the stairs from up above and perched on the edge of the worktable.

"Did you find him?" Grandpa asked.

"Squeeeee," replied Igor.

"Answer yes or no!"

"Yeeeeek!"

"That's better. Is he coming?"

"Squeeee—"

"Go hang in a tree, you faded canary!"

Eddie appeared on the stairs. "Did you want to see me, Grandpa?"

"Come on down—and shut the casket after you."

When Eddie was beside him, Grandpa removed the earphones from his own ears and put them on Eddie's. "Listen to that," he said. "It's plugged in to the kitchen next door."

After a moment of listening, Eddie stiffened,

surprised. "That's Daddy," he said. "He's sobbing. Mother always sounds that way when she's peeling onions."

"Ever know your daddy to peel an onion?" Grandpa said. "He eats 'em peel and all—right?"

Eddie nodded.

"So he must be suffering, wouldn't you say? A grown man like that, sobbing, wouldn't you say he's suffering?"

"He must be suffering," Eddie said.

Grandpa put the earphones on the worktable. "Ask me why your father is suffering," he said.

"Why is—"

"Glad you asked. I was just about to tell you, anyway. He's suffering because he's in the clutches of that Hollywood creature Lynne East. That's why. Do you know what she's doing? She's breaking up your daddy's happy home."

Eddie looked at Grandpa doubtfully.

"Don't back-talk your elders," Grandpa said.

"I wasn't back—"

"Want proof, do you? Listen to that sobbing! Is that proof, or isn't it?"

Eddie put the earphones to his ears again. "I smell onions," he said.

"That's from upstairs," Grandpa said. "Your mother put onions in that stew we had tonight for dinner. Now," he said, "here's the plan—"

"But just because Daddy's sobbing, that doesn't mean that Miss East is breaking up our happy home," Eddie said. "Maybe he's just hungry. He wasn't home for dinner."

"Aha! Do you know why? Don't tell me. I'll tell you. Because that creature lured him away. And she's got plans to lure him even farther away —all the way to Hollywood."

"Well, that won't break up our happy home," Eddie said. "We'll all go to Hollywood. I've been told I have a great future there, too."

Grandpa looked at him dubiously. "Who told you that?"

"Well . . . Spot."

"Bah! What does that mutt know? He hasn't seen any acting since they made the last Rin Tin Tin picture. Besides, is that the kind of life you want? Going around breaking up happy homes?

A boy your age? You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Eddie lowered his eyes. "I guess I wouldn't want to do that."

"What would your mother think of you? Not in your teens yet, and already a home-wrecker! And speaking of your mother, what *about* your mother? How will she feel when she reads in the columns about you and your daddy prancing around out there breaking up homes right and left? It'll depress her."

Eddie sniffled. "Poor Mom."

"Now you've got the idea," Grandpa said. "They're the bad guys, and we're the good guys —right?"

Eddie growled. "We'll run them out of town."

"But we have to be smart about it," Grandpa said. "No rough stuff. Your mother and father wouldn't understand. They still think of them as guests." He reached over to the worktable and picked up a photograph that had been torn from a newspaper. "Know who that is?" he said, handing the picture to Eddie.

"Is it you, as a little boy?"

"Don't be insulting. That's Daryl S. Panic, the producer."

"Which one?"

"The big one. The little one he's holding is his Pekingese. That's your part."

Eddie looked at Grandpa, puzzled.

"I've mixed up a little brew," Grandpa said. He indicated two glasses of brownish liquid on the worktable. "The one on the left is Daryl S. Panic, and the other one's his Pekingese," he said.

"We drink it?"

"Right as rain. Then we confront the whole bunch of them and we order them back to Hollywood. They wouldn't dare not go. Actors and directors do anything a producer tells them. Out of respect. For his money."

Eddie picked up the glass on the right. "Goodbye, Hollywood; hello, happy home."

Grandpa raised the other glass. "Skoal!"

"Cheers!"

They drank.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeek!" squealed Igor.

Arriving at the house next door, John Dallas entered and closed the door behind him. Peering into the dimness, he whispered, "Marilyn?"

No answer.

Dallas groped in the darkness for a chair and started to seat himself, but the intention was interrupted by a sound from the rear of the house.

Warily, Dallas made his way to the kitchen door and opened it a crack. He saw Herman sitting in front of a bag of onions, peeling and weeping mammoth tears. Glancing about, he then observed Lynne East poking at the kitchen wall, apparently in search of something.

"Here's a button," he heard Lynne say.

"Punch it," Herman sobbed.

Lynne pressed the button. There was a whirring sound, as of an unseen motor starting up. Then a panel opened in the wall beside Herman and an ironing board fell out and rapped him soundly on the skull.

Dallas, watching, winced.

But Herman was apparently unaware of the blow. "Anything happen?" he inquired, weeping.

"There's an ironing board on your head," Lynne informed him.

Herman raised his eyes, perplexed. "It wasn't there when I came in," he said. "It must belong to the house."

Dallas quietly closed the door. Then he tiptoed back to the front of the house and exited. Leaving, he muttered irritably to himself. Now he would have to find someplace else to meet Marilyn. So he headed for the Munster home to intercept her and tell her of the change in plans.

As Dallas was reaching the front door of the Munster house, Marilyn was leaving by the rear door. She crossed over to the neighbor's property, then walked along the side of the house toward the front.

Just as Marilyn reached the entrance to the house next door she heard footsteps behind her. Turning, she saw Rock Bound approaching. She recognized him by the glow of his teeth in the darkness.

"Mr. Bound!"

"Hi there," he said brightly. "This is luck, isn't it? I thought I might have to wait for you. And a star waiting for a Little Miss Nobody is unthinkable. Good timing."

"Have you seen Mr. Dallas?" Marilyn asked.

"Don't mention that name in front of my teeth, please."

"But, he—"

"Shall we go in?" Rock said, opening the door. "We have so much to discuss. And I can't stay out late. My teeth need their beauty sleep."

He steered Marilyn inside.

"Where's the light?" she said.

"We won't need it, dear. I have my teeth." He began groping. "Let's find seats. I have so much to say."

"But—"

"Ah, ah, me first. I'm the star, dear."

When they were seated in the darkness, Rock took Marilyn's hand and said, "My dear, from the first moment I saw you, I—"

There was a crash from the direction of the kitchen.

Peering toward it and seeing the thin line of light beneath the kitchen door, Rock said, "Do the mice usually switch on the lights in this part of the country?"

"I don't think that's mice," Marilyn answered.

"You'd better check," Rock said nervously.

"Shouldn't *you* do it?"

"That's a swinging door," Rock said. "The company with which my teeth are insured insists that I never go near a swinging door. Much too dangerous. Someone might be coming out as I was going in, and the resulting—"

"All right, I'll look."

Marilyn tiptoed to the door, pushed it open a crack, and peeked in. She remained there for nearly a full minute. Then she tiptoed back to where Rock was waiting.

"Wh-wh-what was it?" Rock asked. "Mice, I hope."

"No. My uncle."

"Oh."

"He's peeling onions and crying."

"Imagine that."

"And Miss East. She's going around tapping on the kitchen walls."

"The woman's insane. I knew it."

"I know my uncle was going to take acting lessons from her," Marilyn said. "Maybe that's what they're doing."

Rock thought for a moment. "I don't recognize the scene," he said. "It must be from a foreign film."

"We'd better leave."

"Heavens, no. They won't disturb us. I'll whisper."

Marilyn remembered that she was supposed to meet John Dallas here, too. It would be impolite not to wait for him. So she said, "All right, we'll stay. But only until—"

"Oh, it won't take that long," Rock promised. "Now then, where was I? Oh, yes. My dear," he began again, "ever since the first moment I met you. . . ."

8

Herman Helps Out

AN ISOLATED PUFF of fog drifted toward the front door of the house next door. It drew up, then suddenly materialized into Grandpa and Eddie, now in the form of Daryl S. Panic and his Pekingese.

Eddie yelped.

"Quit it!" Grandpa snapped. "You gave up your acting career, remember?"

"I was just trying out the bark," Eddie said. "I've never been a Pekingese before."

"I've never been Daryl S. Panic before, either, but you don't hear me yelping, do you? Quiet now. We'll get the goods on them, then we'll bust in and tell that baggage to pack her baggage."

"May I bite her?" Eddie said.

"No. It'd be a dead giveaway. If you bit her, your daddy would know it was you."

Grandpa tucked Eddie under his arm, then quietly opened the door, closed it behind him, then crept across the dark room toward the kitchen.

"What's that over there?" Eddie whispered. "That light that keeps blinking on and off."

"Some kind of nightlight, I guess."

"It looks like teeth," Eddie whispered.

"All right, it's a nightlight that looks like teeth. You know the kind of crazy gadgets they sell these days."

Reaching the kitchen door, Grandpa and Eddie put their ears to it and listened.

"I found a cupboard," they heard Lynne say.

"Get out a pot," Herman sobbed.

"It won't let me," Lynne replied. "The pot is in a rack and the rack won't let go."

"I told you. This kitchen has a mind of its own. It probably figures it's too late to do any cooking. Don't forget, it'd have to do the cleaning up afterwards."

Grandpa and Eddie heard the slam of a door. Lynne had evidently given up on trying to get the

pot from the cupboard rack.

"It wouldn't do any good, anyway," they heard Lynne say. "If I can't find the stove, a pot wouldn't help."

"Look in the refrigerator," Herman wept.

"I haven't found that either."

"Try the washer. The refrigerator might look more like a washer than a stove."

"Where's the washer?"

"Find the dryer," Herman suggested. "The washer is usually somewhere near the dryer."

On the other side of the door, Grandpa said to Eddie, "Hear that? That's domestic talk. Married folks all over the country talk like that—night in, night out, day in, day out. This has gone further than I even thought."

"It's sickening," Eddie said. "We got here just in time."

At the Munsters' front door, John Dallas listened to the notes of "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You," for the dozenth time.

Still, no one came to the door.

He heard sounds from within. A faint cry of "Save me! Save me!" And a weird whining. But, having become somewhat accustomed to the Munster home, he gave little attention to its sounds except to assume from them that someone —or some*thing*—was inside.

"One more time," Dallas said to himself. "Then I'll leave." He aimed his finger at the button, but as he did so the door began to creak and slowly open. From behind the door came a plea. "Help! Help! Save me!" The voice was vaguely familiar.

"I say, is that someone?" Dallas asked.

"It's me!"

"Probably so. But—"

A small face appeared in the opening. Dallas observed the freckles and red hair.

"There you are!" he exploded. "Where have you been? What do you mean, running out on the picture!"

"Hide me!" Bobby Freckles pleaded. "He's after me!"

"O-ho! Playing games again! Do you know what this could cost you, young man? I could

have you blackballed. Enough of this nonsense. I want you back on the set tomorrow, bright and early."

"Help! Save me! Hide me! He's coming!"

Dallas pulled himself up. "Don't try to engage me in your childish games. I thought you were a trouper. Playing hide-and-seek when there's a picture to be made! What would Actors Equity say to that?"

"Heeeeeeeeeeelp!"

Dallas turned on his heel. "Bright and early," he said again, departing.

"No! No! Don't! Don't leave—"

A spine-quivering howl suddenly erupted in the night.

Dallas stopped, shaken. He clapped his hands to his ears to keep out the monstrous sound. A dark shadow blotted out the moon; then silence again.

Dallas glanced back toward the door. It was still open a bit. But the freckles and red hair were no longer there.

"Children!" Dallas muttered. "No sense of

responsibility!" Then he moved on, headed once more for the house next door, hoping to find Marilyn there.

In the kitchen, Lynne stamped her foot angrily. "Don't just sit there crying! Help me find the oven!"

Herman dabbed at his eyes. "I have only one onion to go," he said.

"Idiot! What good are the onions if we can't find the oven?"

Herman dropped the last onion, still unpeeled, and arose. "Maybe if we pretend it's morning, time for breakfast, something will work," he said.

Lynne groaned. "I'll try anything."

"Well," said Herman brightly, addressing the kitchen, "here it is morning, time for breakfast. I think I'll have a half-dozen coddled eggs, oatmeal, bacon, toast, coffee, a small steak, some—"

Somewhere inside the walls a motor sputtered to life. "That's all it took," Herman said proudly.

"But we still don't know where the oven is."

Herman frowned. "I'll find it. Just a matter of

locating the position of that motor."

He began listening along a wall. "I've got it! It's going this way, headed for the back door."

"You fool, you insulted it, lying about it being breakfast time."

Herman straightened. "It's gone."

"Catch it! Catch it!"

Herman began feeling the wall. "It must be in there somewhere. If I can just—"

A cupboard door suddenly swung open. Herman ducked just in time to keep from getting batted across the room.

"Look! Dishes!" Lynne cried.

"Those are dishes, all right," Herman agreed, peering cautiously into the cupboard. "But where's the stove?"

"Maybe it's trying to tell us something," Lynne said. "Maybe it wants us to set the table first."

Herman reached in and pulled out a plate. "We can try it," he said. "Here, you—"

The plate was suddenly snatched from his hand. But not by Lynne. An invisible suction drew the plate across the room. At the same time

another section of the wall opened up, much in the manner of a trapdoor.

Herman and Lynne watched, fascinated. The plate entered the trapdoor; the trapdoor snapped closed. Then there was the whirring of a motor again, then a grinding of gears.

"I guess it's still sore at us," Herman said.

"What *was* that?"

"Search me. Let's try it again."

This time, Herman lifted a whole stack of dishes from the cupboard. Again the trapdoor opened. Again the suction pulled on the dishes.

"Come back!" Lynne shrieked.

Herman was headed for the trapdoor along with the dishes. "I can't!" he wailed. "It's got me!"

Herman disappeared up to the waist inside the trapdoor. "Blub! Ub-blub-blub-ub!" he called.

Lynne ran to him. She tugged at his legs. "Come out of there! You haven't had your pydogie!"

"Blub-ub-blub-blub!"

"Stop mumbling!"

With a mighty effort—half Herman's, half

Lynne's—they pulled Herman from the trap. The door calmly closed as he exited.

"Where's your head?" Lynne shrieked.

"Blub," Herman answered, clearing away soapsuds from his head.

"You're mumbling again."

"That's the dishwasher, I was saying," Herman said, brushing away the last of the suds. "I guess we'll have to eat without plates," he added. "I don't care to tangle with that thing again."

"Eat? We haven't found the oven."

"We're getting warm, though," Herman said. "We'll just have to keep looking until—" He grinned. "I know! The stove is hiding because it knows we're not ready for it yet."

Lynne held her head. "This is mad!"

"The dishwasher opened up as soon as it thought we were ready, didn't it?" Herman said. "Well, the same with the stove. As soon as we get the pydogie mixed up, ready for the oven, the stove will show itself."

Lynne scowled thoughtfully. "You know, you may be right. Let's get busy."

Hurriedly they began opening the sacks of flour, taking the caps from the gallon containers of milk, and opening the egg and butter cartons.

"Oops!" Herman said. "I spilled some flour on my jacket."

"Dust it off."

Herman began doing that. But he was interrupted by the sound of another motor going into action. He tensed.

"Hear that?" he said.

Lynne looked about warily. "What could it be?"

"Maybe we better make a run for it."

But Herman had spoken too late. Another part of the wall opened. A suction gripped him. It pulled him sprawling toward the waiting hole.

"It's got me!" Herman screamed. "Tell Lily I love her. Tell Eddie—"

Lynne ran to him as he disappeared up to the waist once more.

"Come out!"

"Blub-ub-blub!"

"Didn't you ever learn not to talk with your

mouth full of soapsuds?"

"Blup!"

Lynne braced herself against the wall and tugged at Herman's legs. Gradually he began to emerge. His shoulders appeared. Then his neck. Then his head.

"It's the clothes-washer!" he cried as his head cleared the opening. "It wants my jacket. It wants to wash it."

His head disappeared inside the hole again.

"Blub-blup-blub."

"Give it the jacket!" Lynne screeched. "It wants a sacrifice!"

Head still in the hole, but with Lynne's help, Herman struggled out of his jacket.

"Hurry! We're losing ground. I can't hold you!" Lynne cried.

The jacket suddenly ripped free. With a swoosh it disappeared into the washer. The trapdoor slammed closed, satisfied.

As the door slammed shut, the suction was interrupted.

Lynne and Herman went rolling backwards,

head over heels, across the kitchen floor. They ended up in a corner, a spaghetti of arms, legs, butter, eggs, milk, flour, and onions.

It was just at that moment that Lily, outside, peeked in the kitchen window. She stared in disbelief for a second. Then indignation flashed in her eyes. And she steamed toward the back door.

John Dallas opened the front door, reached in, and flipped on the light. He blinked. Marilyn was seated in one chair. Rock Bound was kneeling in front of her. Hunched over at the kitchen door were Daryl S. Panic and his Pekingese.

"Excuse me," Dallas said. "I thought this was —I say! What *is* this!"

Daryl S. Panic whipped around. "You're all fired—the whole lot of you!" he said. "Back to Hollywood on the first bus!"

Rock leaped to his feet. "But, Mr. Panic, I'm innocent. Whatever somebody else did, somebody else did it, not me. I wasn't even here. I was somewhere else."

"Arf!" barked the Pekingese.

Marilyn squinted at the animal. "Eddie? Is that you?"

"I told you to keep quiet!" Grandpa scolded Eddie. "That bark is a dead giveaway."

"You're in Hollywood," Dallas said confusedly to Panic. "Remember? I just spoke to you this afternoon. Please remember—about the cameras? Remember?"

"Don't argue with your producer," Grandpa said. "When I say I'm here, I'm here."

"Yes, sir, you're here. But—"

A high-pitched shriek came from the kitchen.

"What's that?" Dallas shuddered.

"That's Uncle Herman and Miss East," Marilyn said. "They're acting."

"But that was your Aunt Lily's shriek," Dallas said.

"Oh."

Grandpa, who was nearest, pushed open the kitchen door. The others crowded in behind him.

Lily was shaking a tiny fist at Herman and Lynne, who were trying to untangle themselves.

"I saw you! Behind my back!" Lily cried.

"Darling, how could you see us if we were behind your back?" Lynne asked.

"Lily, it's all a mistake," Herman said, finally freeing himself. "We were looking for the stove."

"With your jacket off?"

"I sacrificed my jacket to the clothes-washer," he explained. "It was it or me."

Lily turned her ire back on Lynne. "You husband thief! You male robber!"

"Now, now," Dallas said, pushing his way into the kitchen. "We're all adults here. We can talk this out calmly. What's this about robbing the mails?"

"Not mails, male," Lily said. "She's been telling Herman she'll make a movie star out of him."

Dallas flinched. "That is serious. It isn't robbery, but it is using the male to defraud. Shame," he said to Lynne.

Lynne's face shattered in tears. "You're picking on me," she wailed. "All I wanted was a husband of my own. All I wanted was a husband who wouldn't yell at me when I was yelling at him. You never let me have what I want!"

"I'll give you something!" said Lily, picking up an egg.

Lynne ducked. The egg splattered on Daryl S. Panic's forehead.

"Murderer!" Panic shrieked, touching his brow. "Look! Blood!"

"That's yellow, Mr. Panic," Dallas pointed out.

Grandpa was not listening. He grabbed up a sack of flour. He swung it wildly. A cloud of flour filled the room.

"Open a window," Dallas sputtered.

There was the sound of a motor starting.

"Run for your lives!" Herman warned.

They ran—into each other. Then suddenly the cloud of flour was gone.

"What happened?" Dallas asked from his perch atop Rock Bound's shoulders.

"That happened," Herman said, pointing.

The Pekingese was plastered against the wall, seemingly held there by a mysterious force.

"Somebody must have hit the switch to the exhaust fan," Herman said. "It drew out the flour. Now it's trying to take the dog."

"Arf!" barked the Pekingese.

"My son, my son!" Lily cried.

"I'll get him!" Herman said, diving toward the fan.

He was hurried along by the fan itself. The second he got within five feet of it the fan sucked him to it. He landed with a thud beside the Pekingese.

"Turn it off!" Herman pleaded.

On hands and knees, Dallas crawled toward the wall. Reaching it, he searched for the switch. Then, with a cry of victory, he announced, "Got it!"

He flicked the switch. There was a grinding of gears. Herman and the Pekingese were suddenly blasted across the room. They hit the opposite wall, then fell to the floor.

"You didn't turn it off, you reversed it," Grandpa said. "Now it's blowing."

"Ay vant to be alone," Lynne said.

"Not yet, you don't!" Lily said. She aimed a bag of flour at Lynne. The flour hit the blast from the fan.

"Where are you!" Lily called. "Come out of that flour, you husband thief!"

"Stop her!" Lynne protested.

"I'll stop her," Herman said. He went groping for Lily, tripped over Rock, went sliding across the kitchen floor on the flour, struck a carton of butter, bounced off a stack of gallon milk containers, then disappeared into an open trapdoor.

"I found the laundry chute!" Herman cried exultantly on the way down.

Butter mixed with the flour. Milk mixed with the butter and flour. Eggs were added. The milk, butter, flour, and eggs blended with the onions.

"I say!"

"Take that!"

"Og-blug-blob!"

In time, Herman made his way back from the basement and turned off the fan. The flour, eggs, milk, butter, and onions settled, revealing a scene of utter devastation.

Dallas drew butter from his eyelids. He sighed sadly, looking around. "And there's not a single camera rolling."

Lily shook flour from her hair. "I'm sorry," she said to Lynne. "It's been ages since I lost my temper like that."

"Don't speak to me," Lynne wept. "I'm dead."

"I guess some good comes of everything," Herman commented.

"Rock—are you all right, dear boy?" Dallas asked.

"Mmmmmrrrbfg."

"Pardon?"

"Mmmmmrrrbfg."

"Open your mouth when you talk, dear boy."

"He won't," Lynne said. "He's probably got a film of flour on his teeth. He wouldn't dream of showing his teeth in public like that."

"So sorry, chap," Dallas said to Rock. Then, peering at Grandpa Munster, he said, "How did you get into this? And what happened to Daryl S. Panic, my producer?"

"I'm Daryl S. Panic," Grandpa frothed. "And this is my pet Pekingese. We're here to tell you that—"

Grandpa snatched another quick look at his

pet Pekingese. It was Eddie. Grandpa looked at himself. He was Grandpa.

"A-ha!" said Dallas. "A-ha! A-ho! Daryl S. Panic wasn't here at all. It was you. You and Eddie. You got into our makeup department, didn't you? Fixed yourself up as Daryl S. Panic and Peke, didn't you? A-ha! A-ho!"

"How could that little boy fix himself up as —" Lynne began.

"Enough!" Dallas raged, jumping to his feet. "Enough of all of this!" He shook a finger at Grandpa and Eddie. "You," he said to Eddie, "are fired! Bobby Freckles is back. I don't need you any more. I saw him tonight, and he'll be back on the set tomorrow morning, bright and early. And as for you," he said to Grandpa, "if I ever again find you impersonating a fine, rich man like Daryl S. Panic, I'll report you to the FBI. Is that clear?"

"What's the Fiends & Bodies Institute got to do with it?" Grandpa asked. "Anyway, I don't belong to the organization anymore. My membership lapsed."

Holding his head, Dallas staggered out.

"Excuse me," Lynne said, following him. "I have to call my agent."

"Mmmmmmrrrrrbfg," said Rock. Then he, too, departed, leaving only the Munsters in the kitchen.

Lily glared at Grandpa and Eddie. "Somehow I have the feeling that you two are to blame for this."

Grandpa raised his eyes toward the ceiling.

"Arf," said Eddie.

"And since you're to blame," Lily said, "you can take the consequences. I want this kitchen cleaned up spic-and-span before you leave here."

"Come on, girls," Herman said to Lily and Marilyn. "I've had enough pydogie for one night."

"Pydogie!" Grandpa erupted.

Herman peered at him. "That's what Miss East was making," he said. To Lily he explained, "That's all that was happening. Honest. I came over for an acting lesson, like I said. Then she told me that since she'd taken me away from dinner she thought she ought to fix me a snack. So

we started making this pydogie, and—"

"Pydogie!" Grandpa shouted again.

"What does that mean?" Herman asked.

"That's the answer," Grandpa said. "I couldn't figure out what it was that broke the spell and turned Eddie and me back into ourselves. It was the pydogie. That's the antidote for the spell—a mixture of flour, milk, butter, eggs, and onions—pydogie."

Lily pointed to the mixture on the floor. "Clean!"

Grandpa groaned. "Get a shovel," he said to Eddie. "We'll scoop it up and put it in a bag."

"Arf!" said Eddie.

9

Bouncing Daryl Panic

THE NEW CAMERAS were flown in by air express and were in place by noon the next day. Dallas had summoned his stars, but they had not yet arrived.

Meanwhile he was prowling the set with a large stick, hoping to find trespassers—hoping in particular to find trespassers who looked like Daryl S. Panic and Peke, so he could use the large stick on Grandpa and Eddie.

Dallas came to the false front, where he had stationed Herman as a guard. Herman saluted. "All quiet, sir."

"Good, good. Keep a sharp eye out."

"Uh, sir," Herman said, "I see that you have all the cameras pointed the other way. I won't be in the picture."

"Mr. Munster, dear boy, I told you I had a

very important part for you. But I didn't say that it would necessarily be *in* the picture. You are, as a matter of fact, *out* of the picture—forever, I hope. But that doesn't mean that your role isn't important. Without you, in fact, the picture might never be finished. There would be no picture. No picture at all."

"How's that?" Herman asked.

"Because if you were not here guarding this false front, your son and his grandfather would find some way to destroy it. I am convinced of that. They are dedicated to driving me completely out of my mind, and destroying my false front would do it. Do you understand now how important you are?"

"Yes, sir," Herman said stoutly. "I'll guard this false front real well. I'll guard it better than it's ever been guarded before. If Grandpa and Eddie come around here and try to destroy it, I'll send them packing, all right. You can depend on me. Why, I'll be the best guard this false front has ever had. I'll guard it with—"

"All right, all right, all right," Dallas said.

"Enough, enough. I believe you."

"I just wanted you to know that I'll be the best guard this false—"

"Yes, yes, yes, yes, I'm sure of it. But now you must excuse me. I have to get back to the set. I see that Bobby Freckles has finally seen fit to join us."

"I see him," Herman nodded, looking toward the cameras. "He looks almost like . . . uh, well, never mind."

"Like what? Like who?"

"Well, I was going to say that—"

"Eddie!" Dallas thundered. "That's Eddie over there, isn't it?"

"Oh, no, that's not him," Herman said. "Now that I've had a second look, I can see it's not Eddie. Eddie looks more like Spot than Bobby does. No, that's Bobby."

Dallas grunted. "I'll take your word for it. I suppose a father should know his own hound—uh, son."

Dallas strode to where Bobby Freckles was standing. He looked at Bobby closely. Bobby had

a dazed, watery look about the eyes.

"Chap . . ." Dallas said softly, not wanting to jar him out of his stupor.

"I'm free. I'm free," Bobby murmured, smiling blissfully.

"Dear boy, any child of your age who commands your salary, with overtime, has no right —*ever*—to say that he's free."

"I'm free . . . free," Bobby continued to murmur. "Free to continue to build my real estate empire, free to compute the annual interest payments on my municipal bonds . . . free, free, free!"

"Dear boy, that all makes a lot of sense, and it's in character—all but that part about being free. You make it sound as if you'd been in captivity."

Bobby shuddered. "I was," he said. "They've been holding me prisoner."

"They? Who?"

Bobby trembled again, remembering. "I saw only one of them."

"You can describe him, of course."

Bobby nodded. "He was a huge shadow."

"You were held prisoner by a *shadow,* dear boy?"

Bobby glared. "I should know what I was held prisoner by, and I say it was a shadow."

Dallas glared back. "And I say, dear boy, that you are *not* Bobby Freckles. You're Eddie, playing another of your childish tricks. What you don't know, dear boy, is that I saw Bobby Freckles only last night. And he certainly wasn't being held prisoner. He was playing hide-and-seek with you. The little faker, in fact, wanted me to hide him."

"That was *me!*" Bobby protested. "I wanted you to save me!"

"Sorry, chap," Dallas said airily, "but the masquerade is over. You've simply not talent enough to pull it off."

Bobby exploded. "I could play Bobby Freckles with my hands tied behind me!"

"A-ha! You admit you're not him."

"I do not. I am!"

"You are not!"

"I am!"

"You are not!"

"I am!"

"You're the most incompetent actor I've ever met. You couldn't act your way out of a paper bag."

"*You* couldn't direct traffic!"

Dallas trembled with wrath. "That does it!" He sank a handful of fingers into Bobby's red hair. "I'll prove you're an impostor. I'll prove this is makeup!"

He tugged.

Bobby screamed.

"By jove," Dallas said, "you *are* Bobby Freckles, aren't you?"

"I told you!"

"Yes, but—" Dallas smiled apologetically. "Well, mistakes can happen, can't they, chap? And, we're all adults here. Let's let bygones be bygones, shall we? We do have a picture to finish, and—"

"Not with me!" Bobby screeched. "I wouldn't stay on this set if you tripled my percentage of the net!"

"Dear boy, we *are* all adults. We can—"

"I'm through! I'm breaking my contract! And *you*—I'm suing you for assault and battery!"

"But I didn't strike you."

"You pulled my hair."

"That isn't—"

"Tell it to my lawyers!" Bobby screamed, storming off.

Dallas shook a fist after him. "You have a negative attitude! And that goes for your fan clubs, too!"

Bobby halted, turned, and answered.

But Dallas didn't hear. He had stuck his fingers into his ears.

Lily and Marilyn were next to arrive on the set.

"We came to watch Herman act," Lily said to Dallas. "I hope we won't disturb you."

"No, no, that's quite all right." Dallas pointed toward the false front. "Mr. Munster is already at work," he said.

Lily looked. Herman was marching back and

forth in front of the false front, his posture stiffly military. Lily studied him for a moment. Then, impressed, she said, "He's really good, isn't he?"

"Yes, I think it's the perfect role for him," Dallas replied.

"Does Uncle Herman have any lines?" Marilyn asked.

"Not at present," Dallas said. "But perhaps I could write some in for him. He could chant 'Hup, two, three, four,' or something on that order as he marches."

"I think Herman would like that," Lily said. "It would remind him of his army days."

"Oh? He was in service?"

"Yes. He was a secret weapon."

"I don't doubt it in the least," Dallas said. "Considering what he did to my cameras, I imagine— Ah! Here comes Rock. Good morning, dear boy."

"If you have anything to say to me, contact my agent," Rock said to Dallas. He flashed his white teeth at Lily and Marilyn. "Good morning, ladies."

Lily nodded, smiling. Marilyn blushed.

"I say, have I offended you, dear boy?" Dallas said, perplexed.

"You hit me in the teeth with a pound of butter last night," Rock said.

"So sorry, chap. I was aiming at the old gentleman."

"Grandpa?" said Lily.

"Yes, Grandpa. I hope you left him chained to something sturdy before you came over here. I will not have him interrupting today. We're shooting the final scene of the picture."

"Don't worry about Grandpa," Marilyn said. "He and Eddie are sulking in the cellar."

"Cooking up something, I'll wager," Dallas grumbled. "I suppose we can expect to see them as Daryl S. Panic, my producer, and Pekingese again."

"Not Eddie," said Lily. "He's decided against an acting career."

"Where's Miss Orange Peel?" said Rock.

"She should be along any second, dear boy."

"I'm not going to stand around waiting for

her," Rock said. "I'm a bigger star than she is. Let her wait for me." Rock headed for the house, intending to hole up in his dressing room.

"Rock, no," Dallas called.

"I have to," Rock said. "I couldn't look myself in the teeth if I didn't."

Dallas sighed heavily, watching Rock depart. But suddenly the gloom lifted. For Lynne East appeared. "Good show!" Dallas beamed. "Rock," he called, "come back, here she is."

Rock halted and looked back. "Her first," he said. "As soon as she's on the set, I'll come back."

"*Him* first," Lynne said. "If he thinks I'm going to wait around for him to show up, he's a bigger ham than everybody says he is."

"Hold me back!" Rock raged, standing his ground.

"Actually," Dallas said, "there's a very simple solution to this. Why don't you enter the set together?"

"I wouldn't be seen dead with him," Lynne snapped.

A few steps away, Lily commented to Marilyn,

"Hear that? I guess she still loves him."

"Then how does this strike you?" Dallas said. "Why don't you enter the set together, but separately?"

"Well . . ." Rock grumbled.

"All right, together," Lynne said grudgingly. "But remember—not together."

"Quite," Dallas smiled. "Now, Rock, you enter from that side. And, Lynne, you enter from that side. As I count off, come forward, a step at a time, until you reach the set. Is that agreeable?"

Lynne and Rock nodded.

"On the count of 'one.' " He took in a deep breath, then counted, "One."

The stars stepped forward.

Lynne let out a shriek of delight. "He took a bigger step than I did! He's on the set first! He has to wait for me! I win!"

"Hold me back!" Rock shouted.

Lynne breezed forward. "I hope none of you had to wait too long for me," she said. "But I'm here, finally, so let's get this thing rolling. I'm exhausted already."

Rock joined them, muttering.

"Good show!" Dallas glowed. "Now, a big smile, all. Then we'll tackle the scene."

A faint grimace passed across Lynne's face.

Rock's mouth exploded in brilliance. "I win!" he crowed. "I smiled bigger than she smiled!"

"I wasn't trying!" Lynne bellowed.

"I win! I win! I win!" Rock taunted.

"Dears, please," Dallas begged. "Please! It's over now. You're even. Lynne won one and Rock won one. Can't we please proceed now?"

"Having everybody waiting for you on the set counts for more than a smile," Lynne muttered.

"Does not!" Rock retorted. "A smile counts for more than having everybody waiting for you on the set. Ask anybody."

"*Shut up!*" Dallas roared.

Silence.

"Now then," Dallas said, calm again. "This scene is a homecoming. We—"

"We did that scene twice," Lynne broke in.

"No, no, darling, this is another homecoming. Rock is—"

"That's all we've done is homecomings," Rock said.

"Dear boy, if a scene is worth doing, it is worth repeating. Now then, again. This scene is a homecoming. Rock has been pardoned for bringing samples home from the bank. It has been discovered that the samples were actually counterfeit fifteen-dollar bills that Bobby had made. And—"

"Where's Bobby?" Lynne asked.

"He can't be with us, darling. Some business with his lawyers. But that doesn't matter. He isn't integral to the scene. So, as I was saying, by bringing the counterfeit fifteen-dollar bills home from the bank, Rock has actually saved the bank a great deal of embarrassment. Consequently, he has been rewarded with a vice-presidency and given the afternoon off."

"That's nice," Rock smiled. "I always did like banks. I'm glad they turned out to be the good guys."

"Yes. Now, as the scene opens, Lynne is standing at the door. Rock—"

"We did that scene before," Lynne said.

"This time it's without garbage, dear."

"I don't like it," Lynne scowled.

"But that's the way it's written."

"Write in some garbage," Lynne said.

"Darling, you don't understand. This is the happy ending. You will be in the doorway. Rock will come up the walk. You'll go into a clinch—then fade out. And, for all anyone will know, you and Rock will live happily ever after." He smiled blissfully. "Isn't that sweet?"

"We've already done that scene," Rock objected.

"Dear boy, of course we've done that scene. We've done that scene hundreds of times. Again and again. But we haven't yet done it on *this* picture."

"Oh. Well, I knew I remembered it from somewhere."

"All right," Lynne said, "I'll clinch. But he better not touch me."

"Dear girl, I'm afraid that's rather essential. We can't have a good clinch with you two at arm's length."

"Then why do we have to clinch at all?" Lynne said. "Couldn't he just call me from the bank and tell me about it?"

"No telephones!" Rock said adamantly. "That shiny black plastic throws a bad reflection on my teeth. My fans wouldn't stand for it."

"Darlings," Dallas said, "may I point out that the clinch is the entire purpose of the picture? That without the clinch there will be no picture. And that without a picture there will be no percentages of the net."

Lynne threw up her hands. "All right, all right, I'll clinch. Art before personal feelings, I suppose."

"Good little trouper," Dallas beamed. "Now then, actors—on the set!"

Walking his post, Herman watched Lynne East go to the doorway of the house next door and Rock Bound head toward the automobile that was parked at the curb.

Herman drew himself up to rigid attention, aware that the shooting was about to begin and

wanting to make a good impression. He held the pose for a full minute, then relaxed. Lily had waved to him. He waved back.

Herman was about to resume his attitude of attention when he heard the sound of a car behind him. Turning, he saw a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce pull up to the false front. Herman glared at it.

The chauffeur got out, then opened the rear door. A short, bald man carrying a Pekingese alighted.

Herman shook his head in dismay. "Grandpa and Eddie again," he said to himself. "They just won't give up."

The short, bald man, the Pekingese under his arm, approached Herman. He was smiling thoughtfully—as if surprised at meeting an old friend he couldn't quite place.

"Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" He paused reflectively. "Have you ever been to Hollywood?"

"Grandpa, your tricks aren't going to do you any good," Herman said. "Mr. Dallas told me to

keep you off the set, and that's what I'm doing."

"You certainly do look familiar. Are you sure you've never been to Hollywood?"

"Stop it, Grandpa."

"Oh. I see. You're an extra, made up like—" He glared at Herman. "Don't call me Grandpa. I'll have you blackballed at every studio in Hollywood."

"Grandpa, I'm telling you, go back to the cellar. And you, Eddie," Herman said to the Pekingese, "go to your room."

The man stared at him. "You're insane."

"Arf!" said the Pekingese.

"There, that proves it," Herman said. "I'd know that bark anywhere. You're Grandpa and Eddie."

"I'm Daryl S. Panic, Hollywood producer!" the man exploded. "And I order you to stand aside and let me pass."

Herman smiled. "I have to admit, you're doing better today than you did last night. But it isn't good enough. I still know you."

"Insane! Mad!"

"How did you do the Rolls Royce?" Herman asked. "You'll have to show me that someday."

"Stark raving insane!"

"Who's that driving?" Herman asked. "Is that Igor?"

"Are you going to stand aside?"

"Sorry, Grandpa. This is my big chance. I'm playing the guard in this scene. If I do it good enough, who knows, it might lead to other parts. I could play an army guard, a prison guard, a—"

"Out of my way!"

"Grandpa, if you don't leave, I'll have to throw you off the set. That's the role I'm playing."

"Last warning! I'm coming through!"

Daryl S. Panic lowered his head, assuming the position of a battering ram. He tucked the Pekingese tightly under his arm. Then he charged. He hit Herman square in the midsection. And he bounced. He bounced a good ten feet.

"Back to the cellar, Grandpa," Herman said.

Groggily, Daryl S. Panic got to his feet. He staggered back to the car, where he held a conference with the chauffeur. A few moments later,

Panic and the chauffeur approached Herman.

"My driver is going to remove you from the premises," Panic informed Herman.

Herman peered closely at the man. "Is that you, Igor?"

"The name is Charles, sir," the chauffeur replied. "And, if you will pardon the use of force, sir, I am now going to remove you from the premises."

"You try it and I'll twist your ears," Herman said.

The chauffeur turned to Daryl S. Panic. "I'm sorry, sir, but I must decline your invitation to remove this gentleman from the premises. I am reminded that I am a member of the Chauffeurs Union. And I must uphold the dignity of the organization."

"You—mouse!" Panic screeched at him.

"Ha! I knew it was Igor!" Herman said. "You gave yourself away that time, Grandpa."

The chauffeur withdrew to the Rolls.

Daryl S. Panic tucked in his Pekingese and backed off again. "I'm coming at you!" he warned

Herman. "I'm a steamroller! Watch out!"

"You can't even remember who you're supposed to be," Herman said. "Which is it, Daryl S. Panic or a steamroller?"

"I'll mow you down!"

"What are you now, Grandpa, a lawn mower?"

"Here I come!"

Once more, Pekingese tucked in his arms, Daryl S. Panic rushed Herman.

There was a thud. This time Daryl S. Panic broke his own previous record, landing some fifteen feet away.

10

Happy Ever After

ON THE SET, Dallas called to his actors. "Ready, all?"

"Ready already," Lynne groaned from her place in the doorway.

"Rock?"

"The cameras are behind me," Rock complained.

"That's so we can see you approaching the house, dear boy. It sets the mood of the homecoming."

"But they'll shoot me from the rear," Rock said. "That's my bad side. Could I walk up to the house backwards?"

"I suppose it *would* add to the humor," Dallas said, considering the suggestion. "But I'm not sure I understand the purpose."

"I'd be saying good-bye to the old life—you

know, being a crook, bringing samples home from the bank. Also, it'd get my teeth in."

Dallas shook his head. "It just isn't box office, dear boy. So shall we play it as written?"

Rock sighed. "I guess the movies will just never grow up."

"Ready, all?"

"Shoot! Shoot!" Lynne moaned.

"Lights!"

Light flooded the daylight scene.

"I said 'Lights!' "

"The lights are on," the lightman said.

"I can't see them."

"It's daytime."

"Oh. All right—cameras!"

"Rolling."

"Action!"

Rock began the walk toward the house. Lynne opened her arms in welcome.

"Darling, relax your fingers," Dallas called to her. "You look as if you intend to choke him." Lynne's fingers drooped.

Halfway up the walk, Rock glanced back over

his shoulder and displayed his teeth to the camera.

Dallas sighed resignedly.

"That's just wonderful, wonderful acting," Lily said.

Dallas glanced at her, and saw that she was faced away from the set. "They're over here," he said.

"Oh, I don't mean—"

But Dallas's attention was back on the set. Rock was one step away from the doorway where Lynne was waiting.

"Now! Clinch!" Dallas called.

Rock closed his arms on air.

"No!" Dallas erupted.

"You said 'now,' " Rock said, dropping his arms to his sides.

"Cut!" Dallas bellowed, marching onto the set. Reaching his stars, he said to Rock, "When I say 'now,' dear boy, I don't mean 'now.' I don't mean that exact second. I mean now."

Rock nodded. "Okay, okay, I get it now."

Dallas threw up his hands in exasperation.

"Try it again," he said, striding back toward the cameras.

Rock returned to the front sidewalk.

"That's just marvelous," Lily said. "I've never seen acting like that before."

Dallas looked at her again and saw that she was still faced away from the set. He closed his eyes and began a slow count to one hundred.

"Are we going to spend all day on this scene?" Lynne complained.

". . . Ninety-eight, ninety-nine, one hundred. No, darling, we're all calm again now. Lights!"

"They're still on."

"Cameras!"

"Rolling."

"Action!"

Once more Rock strolled up the sidewalk toward the house, where Lynne was waiting with open arms—and drooping fingers.

Dallas hummed softly to himself, pleased. "Da, de, da . . . very nice . . . dah, de, dah, de. . . ."

"That was a lovely toss," Lily said.

"Pardon?" Dallas said, keeping his eyes on the

action beginning on the set.

"I said that was a lovely throw."

"He isn't throwing, darling, he's walking. True, he does have a rather special sort of gait, but—"

"Not him," Lily said. "I'm talking about—"

"Ah! There it is! They're going into the clinch. Great! Real box office."

"Oh, that was a good one," Lily said. "He must have gone thirty feet!"

"Darling, what are you—" But as Dallas began to turn to Lily, his attention was suddenly drawn back to the set again. "I say! That *is* box office!"

"Real acting," Lily said in admiration.

"That is stark acting if I've ever seen it," Dallas agreed. Then he called, "Cut! Cut, darlings!"

They did not cut.

"Cut! Cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, dears!"

"Marvelous," Lily said.

Dallas finally turned to her. "Yes, yes, it *is* marvelous. But a bit overdrawn, don't you think? I'll have to trim it once I get it into the cutting room. You see, according to the code, a clinch

can last only so long. And, as you can see, they—"

"I'm not talking about them," Lily broke in. "I'm talking about Herman."

"Herman?"

"Over there," Lily said, pointing. "See, he's going to do it again. He's throwing that funny-looking little man and the Pekingese off the set."

"Great heavens! Them again!" Dallas roared. He looked back at the set. "Cut, dears," he said. "Please cut. Pretty please with percentages on it."

They did not hear.

Dallas shrugged. "Oh, well, I suppose they're discussing something." He strode off toward the false front, followed by Lily and Marilyn.

They arrived just as Daryl S. Panic pounded into Herman's midsection again. Panic bounced once more, did a somersault in the air, then landed on his feet, a good twenty feet away.

"I gave that one a little showmanship," Herman said. "You can't get distance and showmanship, too."

"Nice shot," Dallas said.

Panic came tearing up to them. "Dallas!" he

raged. "Where've you been? This imbecile won't let me on the set!"

Dallas waggled a finger at him. "Don't try to pull that on me, Grandpa. I know you."

"Grandpa! You, too? The whole world's gone mad! Dallas, don't you recognize me? I'm Daryl S. Panic, your producer."

"Yes, and I suppose that Pekingese you're holding is your Pekingese."

"You *suppose?* Of course my Pekingese is my Pekingese!"

Dallas laughed. To the Peke, he said, "You can come out now, Eddie."

"Arf!"

"Eddie! Mind your manners," Herman said. Then to Lily, he said, "That one over there behind the wheel of the car is Igor. Wouldn't know him with that chauffeur's cap on, would you?"

"Are you sure?" Lily said.

"Positive," Herman replied. "Grandpa slipped up and called him a mouse—you know, he calls him a flying mouse when he loses his temper."

"Dallas," Panic raged, "get this brute out of

my way. I'm coming on the set."

Dallas beamed. "Out of the way, Mr. Munster," he said. "It's my turn."

Herman stepped aside. "Age before beauty," he said.

"Dallas, I'll blackball you at every studio in Hollywood! Out of my way!"

Dallas danced around on his toes. "Come at me! Come at me!"

Daryl S. Panic backed off, tucked in his Peke, dug in, then hurled himself at Dallas. Dallas neatly sidestepped the charge, caught Panic by the jacket collar and seat of the trousers, whirled him around, and sent him skyward.

Panic landed.

"You must've got forty feet on that throw," Herman said.

"I say, that *was* fun," Dallas glowed. To Panic, he called, "Come at me again, Grandpa!"

"Excuse me," Lily said, moving away.

"Don't leave," Herman said. "Mr. Dallas is going to do it again."

"I'll be right back," Lily promised.

Dallas was dancing around on his toes again. "Come at me like a rocket again, Grandpa!"

Panic shook a fist at him—from a distance. "You'll never work on another Panic picture, Dallas!"

"Zoom! Zoom! Come at me, Grandpa!"

"That does it! I'm coming!"

"Bounce him off your tummy this time," Herman suggested to Dallas. "I think it may be good for the digestion."

Dallas sucked in air, flattening his stomach. "I'm going for a record on distance this time," he announced.

Head down, Panic came roaring in.

"Arf!" screamed the Peke.

Panic hit. Dallas closed like a book, enfolding Panic inside his frame. And down they went—together.

"That wasn't much for distance," Herman commented.

"I'm not sure that it was at all wise either," Dallas said sickly.

At that moment, Lily reappeared. She was

carrying a bulging flour sack. "Herman, you hold Grandpa a minute," she said. "I'm not sure he *is* Grandpa."

Panic raised his head. "I'm *not* Grandpa! I'm Daryl S. Panic. Can't anyone understand—"

The protest was cut short. Lily had dumped the contents of the flour sack over Panic's head. The others looked on, puzzled.

"Brfpt!" Panic sputtered.

Lily sighed. "That's not Grandpa," she said. "Know what was in that sack? Pydogie mix. Grandpa and Eddie scooped it up last night. And if that was Grandpa and Eddie I just dumped it on, they'd be Grandpa and Eddie again. But they're not. They're still that funny-looking little man and a Pekingese."

"Nonsense!" said Dallas. "Daryl S. Panic is in Hollywood."

"I'm not! I'm here!" Panic screamed.

"You're not either!" Dallas insisted. "You're Grandpa and Eddie!"

"Someone call us?" said a voice.

They all turned. Grandpa and Eddie were

standing in front of the false front.

"No, we didn't call you!" Dallas said. "We're throwing you off the set. And you're going to stay off the set, understand? This time we're going to throw you so far—"

The truth struck Dallas like the blow of a hammer. His face turned ashen. His body trembled. Then, turning to Daryl S. Panic, he said stumblingly, "Apparently there's been a mistake made, Mr. Panic."

"Lie down, Dallas," Panic growled. "You're dead."

Dallas threw himself to the ground. "Yes, sir, anything you say, sir, Mr. Panic. Look, I'm lying down; I'm dead, sir. Anything you want, Mr. Panic."

"What I want is on my set," Panic said.

And, so saying, he entered the set—right over Dallas's "dead" body.

As soon as Panic had passed, Dallas leaped up and ran after him. "Mr. Panic, please, listen. It's a long story. Please listen to me. I know you won't believe it, but please give me a hearing. You see,

there's this grandfather. Last night, he was you. And there's this child, Eddie. He was your Pekingese. See? I told you you wouldn't believe it. But it's the truth. Please, Mr. Panic, listen."

Panic strode on, toward the house.

"Mr. Panic, please. It's been a nightmare. You won't believe it. Mr. Munster. The cameras explode. I'm a dog, and Rock is a cat. Chasing each other through a secret passageway. Bobby Freckles kidnapped by a shadow. I know, I know, I know, you don't believe it. But it's the truth. My stars—Rock and Lynne. They detest each other. I can't—"

Panic and Dallas had reached Rock and Lynne, who were still in the clinch.

Panic looked them up and down. "Detest each other, do they?"

Dallas drooped. "Cut," he said feebly to his stars.

They parted.

"Hi, Mr. Panic," Rock smiled. "I'd know you anywhere."

"So would I, Mr. Panic," Dallas said hurriedly.

"Anywhere. I'd know you even if— Uh, well. . . ."

"Sorry about the picture, Mr. Panic," Lynne said. "We have to delay it. We have our private lives to live."

"What's that?" Panic growled.

"She doesn't know what she's saying," Dallas said. "She's delirious. You saw Rock holding her up."

"We have to interrupt the shooting," Lynne said. "I know it will cost you a lot of money. You have a saying: 'Time is money.' But we simply must go now. We're going to be married today."

Panic turned on Dallas. "This is your fault!"

"It isn't," Dallas protested. "I encouraged them to hate each other. I knew that's what you wanted, Mr. Panic."

"Who said that's what I wanted?"

"Then I *didn't* encourage them to hate each other. I did whatever it was you wanted, Mr. Panic."

"Dallas, you're an idiot."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Panic, I'm an idiot."

"Just keep the cameras rolling, idiot," Rock

said to Dallas. "We'll be back as soon as we get married."

"We have our private lives to think of," Lynne said. "Besides, it's what our fans want."

"You can't leave now!" Panic stormed. "I have a saying: 'Time is money.' "

"We have a saying, too, darling," Lynne said. She waved a limp hand. " 'Ta-ta.' That's our saying."

" 'Ta-ta'? What good is a saying like that? It doesn't mention money."

There was no answer. Lynne and Rock, hand in hand, were halfway across the set, on their way to the altar.

"Dallas, I want a word with you!" Panic boomed. He turned on his heel and strode on into the house.

"Yes, sir. It's a long, sordid story, sir. Lynne was giving Herman Munster acting lessons. And the pydogie got caught in the exhaust fan. But that was later. It started with picnickers in the game preserve. No, no, that was later, too. Actually, it started. . . ."

Back at the false front, Herman and Lily, Marilyn and Grandpa and Eddie watched Dallas and Panic disappear into the house.

Lily shook her head in wonder. "They're a strange, strange breed."

"Definitely abnormal," Herman murmured.

"I told you they're not our kind of people," Grandpa said.

Herman patted his stomach. "That pounding Mr. Panic gave me started up my heartburn," he said.

Lily giggled. "That's not heartburn. You're hungry."

"Lily's right," Grandpa said. "Couldn't be heartburn. Your heart's still down in the cellar on the worktable."

"Well then, I guess I'd better eat," Herman said, leading the family toward home.

11

Double Box Office!

PEEKING OUT from behind a drape later, Herman reported to Lily, "The sun's gone down."

"I knew I felt better. That explains it."

They were on their way to the parlor. Herman took Lily's arm and squeezed it affectionately. "Things are always darkest before the nightfall," he said. "I guess nothing seems as bad in the dark as it did in the daylight."

"You're so wise, Herman."

In the parlor, Herman picked up the latest issue of the *Mortuary Journal* and settled on the sofa. Lily curled up in the electric chair.

But no sooner had they settled down than the door chimes rang out the familiar tune.

From the entrance hall, Marilyn called out, "I'll get it."

"I hope it isn't that Mr. Dallas calling on Marilyn again," Herman said to Lily. "I think Grandpa's right—he just isn't our kind of person."

"Well, they do have a lot in common, he and Marilyn," Lily said. "In looks, I mean, poor things."

"Yes, but it takes more than bad looks to make a marriage. And suppose Marilyn's looks change someday? It could happen. That's not *all* Miss America blood running in her veins. Her father was my brother."

"I agree, there's hope for her," Lily said.

"Shhh! Here she comes."

Marilyn entered, followed by John Dallas and Daryl S. Panic. Dallas appeared to be his exuberant self again.

"What ho!" Dallas said, greeting Herman and Lily. "You know Mr. Panic, I believe."

"We've met," Herman said.

"Sorry about your stomach," Panic said.

"Munsters," Dallas said excitedly, "I have an announcement."

"We were afraid of that," Herman said. "We

were just talking about it. But are you sure you kids have thought this through? Marriage is a serious—"

"Uncle Herman!" Marilyn said, blushing.

"What?" said Dallas. Then, "No, no, this doesn't concern that. This concerns all of you, not just dear Marilyn. The fact is, Mr. Panic is going to make stars of you all."

"That's right," Panic chimed in. "I'm going to make stars of you. Dallas and I have been looking at the scenes that have been shot so far. And I'm pleased. Very pleased."

"You see," Dallas said, "our intention was to shoot a romantic comedy. Because, of course, that's box office. But, as it's turned out—what with you, Mr. Munster, and your son and Grandpa in the picture—what we have is not only a romantic comedy, but also a horror movie. And that, as anyone will tell you, is double box office."

"Say that again," Panic smiled. "I like the sound of the words."

"A combination romantic comedy and horror movie," Dallas repeated.

"Not *that,* you idiot!"

"Double box office," Dallas said quickly.

"That's better," Panic said, his good humor returning.

"Well, we're glad it turned out so nicely for you," Lily said.

"Then you *will* continue with the picture?" Dallas said.

"You mean you want to take more pictures?" Herman said. "Haven't you got enough already?"

"Dear boy, we have only the beginning scene, the middle scene, and the ending," Dallas said. "It needs a bit of filling out. So, as soon as Rock and Lynne return, we'll resume shooting. With you Munsters in the picture, of course."

"Ummmm, well, that's nice of you, but—"

Herman was interrupted by the ringing of the door chimes.

"I'll get it this time," Lily said, departing.

"You mean you're saying no?" Dallas said to Herman.

"It's like this," Herman tried to explain. "We lead a nice, normal life. We're happy the way we

are. I'm afraid that if we got mixed up with a bunch of . . . ah, let me put it another way. I have to think of the children, Eddie and Marilyn. They're at an age where if they got mixed up with a bunch of . . . ah, to put it another way. You see, I wouldn't want them to . . . ah. . . ."

Herman was saved by Lily's reappearance.

"It's a telegram for you, Mr. Panic," she said.

Daryl S. Panic took the yellow envelope from Lily and tore it open. He read aloud:

DEAR MR. PANIC:
OFF ON HONEYMOON. UNABLE TO CONTINUE WITH PICTURE EVER. FORMING OUR OWN COMPANY TO PRODUCE BLOW-BY-BLOW STORY OF OUR OWN HONEYMOON. OUR FANS DEMAND IT.

LYNNE AND ROCK

"Doomed!" moaned Dallas.

"On the contrary," said Daryl S. Panic. "We'll release the picture just as it is."

"With only three unconnected scenes?" said Dallas. "It wouldn't make any sense."

"We'll dub in Italian dialogue," explained Panic. "The actors will sound like they're speaking Italian."

"How will that help?" Dallas asked.

"We'll have a combination romantic comedy, horror picture, and foreign movie," Panic said. "A *triple* box office smash!"

Dallas fell to his knees. "Mr. Panic, it's true what they say—you *are* a genius!"

Panic brushed the compliment aside. Turning to the Munsters, he said, "Sorry, folks, but you're all has-beens. I don't need you any more." Then, tipping his Pekingese, he turned and strode from the room. "Coming, Dallas?"

"Coming, Mother . . . Mr. Panic, I mean. I'll be along in just a moment." To Marilyn, he said, "May I have a word with you, my dear?"

"Well . . ." Marilyn looked flustered.

"Walk to the door with him, dear," Lily said.

Marilyn nodded nervously.

As soon as they were out of the parlor, Dallas clasped Marilyn's hand. "Dear girl, do you remember? I spoke to you about a Hollywood ca-

reer. That's what I offer you now—riches, adoration, all that every girl dreams of."

"But, John, I'm not an actress."

"Actress? What does that have to do with it? I'm asking you to become my wife. I'm offering you a Hollywood career as my darling beloved—my riches, the adoration of my fans."

Marilyn lowered her eyes. "I'm sorry, John, I—"

Dallas sighed sadly. "I know. I expected that. We're just not the same sort, are we? You're . . . and I'm. . . . I've thought about that, too. It would be difficult to explain in Hollywood. Your family. . . ."

"I'm sorry."

"Oh, well," he said, brightening. "Pip-pip, and all that."

Marilyn watched him go. Then she turned back to the parlor.

"Are they gone?" Lily asked as she entered.

"Yes." Marilyn sniffled. "He proposed."

"And you . . . ?"

"I said no," Marilyn replied. "He understood.

I just couldn't live that sort of life."

Herman nodded. "They were strange," he said. "Very, very strange."

"I think it's the heat out there that causes it," Lily said.

Marilyn sniffled again. "Will you excuse me, please?"

"Yes, dear."

Marilyn ran from the room.

"Poor kid," Herman said. "She's all broken up."

"She'll get over it," Lily said.

Herman sighed. He picked up the *Mortuary Journal* again and resumed reading. Then suddenly he looked up, smiling. "Everything's going to be all right, Lily," he said.

"How can you be so sure?"

"There's a story in here about how they can tell what the weather's going to be weeks in advance. And the forecast is for an early winter."

Lily smiled. "All's well that ends well," she said.